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MORAL ASPECTS

OF

CITY LIFE.

A SERIES OF LECTURES

BY

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PREFACE.

Some who may read this volume will, perhaps, differ from me in respect to its themes, and the method of their treatment, so far as the pulpit and the Sabbath are concerned. I can only say that the moral significance which I detect in these subjects is stated in the first discourse, and my own ideas of the latitude of pulpit discussion, will be found, sufficiently qualified, as I think, in the sixth. It has been my *object*, at least, to arouse my hearers from the indifference of custom, to a recognition of the spiritual suggestions, the duties, the illimitable relations, which are involved with every aspect of their daily lot—to show them the argument for religion and for a religious life, which comes to them not merely from the pulpit and from the peculiar associations of the Sabbath,

but from every field of action, and from every experience. In seeking to do this, I have used that language which I deemed most effective, and without any refined elaboration have sent it to type very much as it fell from my lips. I trust, however, be the faults of this book what they may, that some influence may go out from it for individual virtue and religion, and for a more Christian state of society in our great cities.

E. H. C.

New-York, October, 1853.

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MORAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CITY.

THE MORAL ASPECTS OF CITY LIFE.

I.

THE MORAL SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CITY.

——O THOU that art situate at the entry of the sea, which art a merchant of the people for many isles....Thy borders are in the midst of the seas, thy builders have perfected thy beauty ... Thy riches, and thy fairs, thy merchandise, thy mariners, and thy pilots, thy calkers, and the occupiers of thy merchandise, and all thy men of war, that are in thee, and in all thy company which is in the midst of thee,——

EZEKIEL XXVII.: 3, 4, 27.

THESE words are compiled from different portions of the prophet's burden concerning Tyre. The larger part of the chapter is a magnificent description of a great city in the fulness of its prosperity, teeming with a busy population, adorned with the perfection of art, ripe with luxury, trafficking with all lands, stretching its commerce along every shore—the metropolitan

heart of nations, receiving the contributions and sending out the life-blood of a world.

And such was the commercial capital of the ancient world. Such was queenly Tyre, "situate at the entry of the sea," whose broad expanse and dashing waves always inspire with enterprise, intelligence, and freedom; and which, as it were, breaking up the monotony of Oriental custom, gave to this metropolis a character of its own, and, perhaps, more than any other ancient city, identified it with our modern life. Such was Tyre, with its purple and its fabrics, its streets crowded with the representatives of nations, its ware-houses stored with the riches of kingdoms, and its caravans toiling over half the globe. Such was Tyre, whose ships circumnavigated Africa ages before De Gama was born, and coasting far beyond the pillars of Hercules, touched the savage shores of Britain; whose sails were fanned at the same time by the cold winds of the Baltic and the breath of Indian seas; for which Lebanon yielded masts, and Egypt linen, and Spain gold; and which, long before Rome had a place in the earth, wrought less dazzling, it may be, but more enduring conquests, with its commerce, its colonies, and its alphabet.

A great, prosperous, intelligent city, with all the phases of a city—such was Tyre; and such,

essentially, we may see even now, as we look around us.

And what spectacle in the world is more impressive than a metropolis like this, unfolding all its activities? Its piles of architecture glittering in the sun, and the multiform humanity that stirs within. The din of labor stretching far and wide its brawny strength; the cosmopolitan life foaming through its arteries; the perpetual excitement of something new, the "first crush of the grape," in art, literature, and invention; this huge brain, in which all the nerves of the world meet; the pulses of its enterprise throbbing through the land, and dashing from the bows of a thousand ships!

And if, as the centre of human activity, it also encloses all forms of human corruption; if its splendor is overlapped by poverty and crime; if here the foulness and meanness of the human heart come out full blown; if deeds are enacted here that are hidden from the light of day, and that the holy stars will not look upon; if we must come down from this poetical summary of the city and confront its sad details, walking through lanes that are lazar-houses, and temptations that are death; why, it only deepens the impression which I would excite in calling your attention to this subject. It only helps show us

that, however studied—in broad daylight, or in darkness, or by the glimpses of the moon—the city is something more than an assemblage of buildings or a multitude of people; something more than a market or a dwelling-place; that, deeper than all, it has a *moral* significance; and that the pulpit may perform a legitimate work, in blending its various aspects with the thoughts of the Sabbath and the influences of religion.

Inviting your attention, then, to a series of discourses upon some of these phases of City Life, I have taken for my subject this evening the general fact just suggested—*The Moral Significance of the City.*

The poet's line

"God made the country but man made the town,"

has, doubtless, a proper signification; but it helps conceal a deeper truth. It rightly exalts the Divine works and ways far above any human achievement. When one is sick and tired with routine, when he is deluded by the shows or troubled with the afflictions of life, let him go out into the calm breadth of nature, and confer with realities that are fresh and unabused as they came from the hands of their Maker. Whatever is inspiring in mountains, lovely in the reach of landscape, or impressive in the still woods, shall

work his deliverance from weariness and deceit. Let the meditative man pass out from tangled controversy into the harmonies of the universe. Let the mind, injured by the fallacies and the nonsense of books, recover health in studying the stereotypes of God. And let vice and sordidness, and the entire brood of evil passion, and the cankered heart, go, and be rebuked by the Holy Presence, which is so evident in the pure air and the sky. "God made the country"—and all around it keeps the original stamp of the Maker. But "man makes the town"—the fabrics of brick and stone that shall crumble away, the uproar and the pretension, the fickle customs, and the atmosphere of guilt.

But when we pass from the things man does to *man* himself, the city assumes an interest which does not belong to the land or the sea. His achievements may not be compared with the Divine display, but humanity itself is God's work as well as nature, and it is His greater work. The book to which he commits his thought seems a feeble thing, when held up in the immensity of the universe; but thought, in its essence, is more wonderful than electric currents and wheeling constellations. In short, the interest of the city is as superior to that of the country, as humanity is to nature; as the soul is to the forms and forces

of matter; as the great drama of existence is to the theatre in which it is enacted. In the country we have artistic inspirations and scientific opportunities. The city reveals the moral ends of being, and sets the awful problem of life. The country soothes us, refreshes us, lifts us up with religious suggestion. The city furnishes testimonies of religious need—of man's profound want of that Light and Help which nature cannot afford.

The city, then, possesses all the moral significance of human life itself, inasmuch as it is the peculiar centre and sphere of human life. Walking among its crowds, and catching its various phases, while we find so much to appal and to sicken us, we find much also to encourage us; and, in all, discover confirmations of religion, and the great argument for faith.

For, in the first place, the city illustrates the *capabilities* of humanity. The bare material of the city—this assemblage of buildings—shows that he who toils among them is a being of wonderful nature, and momentous destiny. The basis of religion—its assumption of a spiritual quality in man—is established by this single fact. Walk through these streets! Survey these stately structures! Do they not bear witness that the thought which conceived them, and the energy which

reared them, is something greater and more enduring than themselves? Man, with nothing but his brain and his hand, has thus conquered and moulded matter—has transformed the wilderness into this great city, "situate at the entry of the sea." Familiar as the achievement is, I ask you, is there not a moral significance in it which lifts us up to the grandest conclusions of faith?

But when we enter, and consider the wonders of invention and of art, the trophies of enterprise, and all the sinews of power, the moral impression is still more striking. Here are the symbols of civilization—the measures of human progress. Here is what the mind of man has achieved through the ages; evident not only in material improvements, but in laws and customs; in a deference to sanctions which unconsciously control us in the street and in the home. For even New York—and it is a venturesome assertion to make—is better off in these respects than Tyre with its fine linen and its purple.

Or, go into the departments of culture—the schools and lyceums—and consider the truths that are here accumulated, and the light that is diffused abroad. Observe, too, the evidences of liberty, the influence of the pulpit and the press, the circulation of free thought; in fine, all the achievements in the worlds of matter and of mind—for

the city is the most complete representative of these. Applicable, I trust, here and at the present time, as when and where he wrote, is that noble passage of Milton. "Behold, now, this vast city," says he; "a city of refuge, the mansion-house of liberty, encompassed and surrounded with His protection; the shop of war hath not there more anvils and hammers working, to fashion out the plates and instruments of armed justice in defence of beleaguered truth, than there be pens and heads there, sitting by their studious lamps, musing, searching, revolving new notions and ideas." And the city, I say, as representing not only the material greatness which man has wrought out, but his mental and social energy, peculiarly illustrates the moral significance which lies in the *capabilities* of humanity. And that herein *is* a moral significance, who can fail to discern? The busy, inventive, achieving intellect, that builds the city, and fills it with the products of matter and of mind, advancing to nobler attainments as generations pass away, of itself refutes the doubt of the skeptic and the dogma of the materialist, reveals the sanctions of the highest faith, and justifies the interest which religion takes in the soul of man. Wake up from this indifference, that grows out of familiarity! Shake off this dullness, that perceives nothing but brick,

and granite, and streaming crowds! The city, lifting itself up so stately at the gates of the sea, is not only a symbol of material greatness—it is a magnificent argument for religion. The enterprise that runs through it is the setting of an exhaustless current. They who pass by you, in worn or in shining garments, are spiritual existences, exhibiting, under all the phases of condition a moral significance—souls, that must endure when these things which they have conceived in their thoughts, and fashioned with their hands, shall have vanished away.

But I remark, again, that the City especially reveals the *moral qualities* of our nature. Where men are crowded together, the good and evil that are in them are more intensely excited and thrown to the surface. Here, more than anywhere else, the human heart is turned inside out, and its secret avenues are re-cast in the streets and bye-places. Wickedness is bold, and temptation importunate. And O! what revelations of this human heart there are to scare and to sicken us. How thin is even the veil of hypocrisy; how impudently vice stalks in the sunshine; and how the glimpses of the night refute the pretensions of the day! O! misanthrope, take your lantern and go abroad. You shall accumulate facts enough, not only to confirm yourself, but to stagger us, who

believe in veins of goodness and nourish heart of hope. Let its rays flicker at once upon the sufferings of unrequited labor, and the frost-work of selfishness that hangs around stately halls. Let it shine upon pools dark with undistinguishable horrors, and the faces that look out therefrom in which the demon has obliterated the man. Turn it full upon pandering temptation, and womanly honor fighting with hunger and drowned in despair. Let it expose the unclean appetites that are sleeked over with fashion, and the beastliness that assumes the name of "gentleman." Let it flash upon the permitted shambles of lust, and the licensed fountains of damnation. It will not have to throw its beams far to show the work of crime, and the deed of violence. Or, it may be, the day-light furnishes instances enough, with its folly and extravagance; its cent. per cent. sordidness grinding muscles and souls; its long service at the shrine of mammon, and its patronizing recognition of God's altar; its sonorous piety and small-change philanthropy; its substitution of policy for principle, and its preference of the temporal good to the eternal Right. One must be almost ready to say, that great cities are indeed "great sores," and that their splendor is only cutaneous. And a fearful, humiliating lesson it is of what is in the human heart—of what lurks in

the moral nature of us all. The evil which festers in the huge metropolis, has, surely, an awful significance.

And yet it is not all like this—let the Theologian's observation, let the Misanthrope's lantern, discover what they can. It is not all like this. The close contact that excites the worst passions of humanity also elicits its sympathies, and noble charities are born of all this misery and guilt. The vast movement of business is not entirely carried on in a sordid spirit. It is cheering to think how a thousand wheels of labor are turned by dear affections, and kept in motion by self-sacrificing endurance; of the good feeling that gushes warm through these intersecting lines of interest; and of the honor that stands up in the baseness of the world like a rock. Innocence may thrive best in the sweet air of the country, but if

> "——life is not as idle ore,
> But iron dug from central gloom,
> And heated hot with burning fears,
> And dipped in baths of hissing tears,
> And battered by the shocks of doom,
> To shape and use——"

then that which is strongest and noblest in our nature is illustrated in the city. Search it again, not to prop a theory, but with comprehensive eyes. Along those beaten ways you will find domestic

sanctities scattered like dew; and the fragrance of philanthropy and prayer, sweeter than the breath of nature, ascending to heaven. I should not look for the truest heroism in the forlorn hope, or the night-watch on the tented field, but in many a garret and work-shop right around us. And there, where womanhood works face to face with death, or patiently plods in its weary routine, yet keeps its heart untainted; there, where toil bears on its sturdy shoulders the burden of the aged and the sick; there where poverty ministers as with the two mites to wretchedness yet more extreme; there, where the coarse fare is consecrated by family affection, and eaten with stainless hands; there do I discover the real greatness of our nature, and rejoice to find, amidst the guilt of the city, proofs of beautiful, immortal love.

In fact, the city is, as it were, an embodied man. In its various features it symbolizes the good and the evil that are in his own mind and heart. His passions and appetites are illustrated in its dens of riot, and places of infamy. Its expanding warehouses express his enterprise and ambition. Its dwellings are the counterpart of his affections. Still nobler structures image the majesty of his intellect, and the functions of his moral sense. While the sacred spires that tower here and there,

over all the rest, represent those instincts that rise above the world and point beyond the stars.

And are not these mingled elements of good and evil the very facts which Religion recognizes in humanity, and to which it applies? Are not these the grounds of its warnings and encouragements, its retributions and rewards? And, from this point of view, is there not a moral significance in the city, and a suggestion that we should study its diversified phases in the spirit of Him who looked upon man with blended sorrow and regard, and saw in him so much to love, and so much to die for?

But I observe, once more, that the moral significance of the city is illustrated in the *pursuits* in which its multitudes are engaged. And appropriately is this seeking for wealth, pleasure, fame, called a "pursuit," for it is always an object ahead, always something to be attained. It never imparts the satisfaction of a complete end. It shows that the worker exists for a purpose beyond his work; that his money, or his power, or his social position, is but the vehicle of a more enduring substance. Surely there is impressiveness, there is moral suggestion, in this universal *restlessness*—this hum, and movement, and ceaseless toil. It proclaims a good yet to be attained, or else that the good which is attained is unsatisfactory. It is

a testimony to the incompleteness of the earthly state, and the transcendent destinies of the soul. In considering the evils which cluster in the city, we may say that if it sets the problem of human life in its most ghastly and discouraging shapes, yet here also that problem will be most thoroughly solved. But, in view of the phenomena we are now considering, we may add that here, likewise, the meaning of our earthly existence is tried out and made comparatively clear. The spectacle of these incessant but ever-changing multitudes, of the good which they seek, and the results of their getting, freshens in us the moral conviction that this life is not only transitory but preliminary; that it is a discipline working out spiritual and eternal consequences; and that these mortal possessions are means, not ends. All that Religion affirms of the unsatisfactoriness of the world, and the incompleteness of the sensual life; its interpretation of the mingled joy and sorrow of our existence, and its prophecy of undying good; is re-affirmed in the bustle of these streets—in these exultations and disappointments—in this crowd pouring onward, ever onward, impelled by desires that cannot be filled, seeking yet never attaining, grasping only to find their possessions inadequate and their thirst still increased for something more. And such is the moral significance that may be de-

tected in the movements, the faces, the busy arenas, the living tides of the city.

Finally, I remark that the city, in a special manner, illustrates the fundamental fact that *Life itself is moral*—is intertwined with spiritual sanctions, and is under Providential control. That such is the case with *individuals*, is readily seen. But impressiveness is added to the fact—we discern more clearly the absolute integrity of the Law—when it appears as operating in *communities*. God can easily be forgotten in the city. On the prairie, on the shores of the sea, in the shadow of awful mountains, a sense of His presence forces itself upon the most frivolous and vile. I think that there is a weightier pressure of moral sanctions—a more single-eyed perception of principles in the country than in the city. There is a fresher consciousness of dependence, too, where every year God visibly touches the springs of nature, and His creative glory bursts forth afresh. But in the city there is a more intense play of secondary causes, a delusion of the artificial, which shuts man in to his own devices, and makes him less scrupulous. The husbandman has more immediate transactions with Providence, so to speak. Its bounty is his treasury, and his drafts are honored in the sunshine and the shower. The merchant looks more to his fellow-men, and is tempted to

twist his convictions to their caprices. On Sundays he finds great first principles stowed away in his pew, with his bible and his hymn-book; but he carries with him a more portable set for the negotiations of the week. He mortgages conscience to policy, and gets a draft on the bank. What I have already said of the integrity and the honor that flourish among all these temptations, will acquit me of the charge of laying down a sweeping proposition. But I speak of *tendencies*. And I would observe that in such a position, where human achievement is so prominent, and policy so readily becomes the law, it is well to recognize the fact that the moral sanctions of the universe move steadily forward; that their rewards and their retributions girdle communities as well as individuals; that the gain which is bought with corruption, and the luxury which is steeped in vice, and the prosperity which sweeps away the thought of God, embosom the seeds of ruin; that material greatness alone, strengthened by all the inventions of the time, cannot prop a state; that *property* is not an enduring or saving good—that nothing endures or saves but Truth and Virtue. Such is the deepest moral lesson that unfolds itself in the city we now look upon—such is the moral significance of the cities that have crumbled away. I commenced by referring to the splendor of an-

cient Tyre. Read the description of it on the pages of Isaiah and Ezekiel. And because of the guilt that was mixed with its power and its beauty, read also their solemn predictions of its fall. It *has* fallen. The modern traveller tells us of its loneliness and ruin; the sea murmuring around its silent desolation, and its "columns of red and grey granite strewing the shore and sunken in the waves." "They shall make a spoil of thy riches," said the prophet, "and make a prey of thy merchandize: and they shall break down thy walls, and destroy thy pleasant houses: and they shall lay thy stones, and thy timber, and thy dust, in the midst of the water." It was to become "like the top of a rock—a place to spread nets upon;" and such it is!

But the desolate place on yonder shore is not only an impressive witness to Prophecy; it is itself a prophet to other cities. Sitting there, with its head cowled by desolation, and its feet chafed by the sea, from its solemn lips there comes an appeal to London, Paris, New York, warning us that there is no stability in material greatness; that corruption and luxury, however fortified by power, however swathed in splendor, cannot elude the relentless law; but that now, as ever, God holds the world in His hands and His Eternal Sanctions control it.

But, if communities are thus responsible, remember, hearer, that you and I help make up community. Let not our consideration of the moral significance of the great city, be too abstract. Go forth, and look upon it as it stands in relation to your own spiritual being, and as the light of eternity streams through it. Remember, that God weighs not the gold and silver that are in it, the strong array of palaces and towers, the glittering equipage and the machinery of toil. He weighs not these, but souls—your soul and mine!

Wake up, then, O! indifferent one, to a sense of the moral consequences of everything you do! Step by step, as you go, God's awards go with you. Wake to a conception of the greatness of this existence that embosoms the vast city, and embosoms you! The city! Why, its profoundest significance is in its connection with your own spiritual being. See, from this point of view, how it melts away and becomes blended with that *other* city, which slopes upward, with its shining streets and its perpetual gates. Lo! a clear splendor streams down from that, making your least performance momentous and sublime. Lo! in the thick mart, the murky work-shop, and all the bye-ways of your action, you are surrounded by a great cloud of witnesses. Notwithstanding the

multitudes, the pomp, the solid walls, you are a spirit, with your solitary responsibility, treading the eternal path. The pealing clock tells you that you are yet within the scope of time—but it counts off also the periods of your inward history. It not only divides the hours of rest and of toil, it proclaims moral defeat or moral victory.

THE WORLD OF TRAFFIC.

II.

THE WORLD OF TRAFFIC.

——Whose merchants are princes, whose traffickers are the honorable of the earth.——

ISAIAH XXIII. 8.

IN the preceding discourse, I spoke of the impressiveness and grandeur of a great metropolis, with all its agents of life and power in full operation. For the most part, these are the phenomena of Traffic—the play of reciprocal interests between man and man, between one portion of a country and another, and between the nations of the earth. It is material prosperity that wakes through all the city the tumult, the excitement, the roar of busy wheels. These stately piles are the trophies of an industry that spins its web around the globe. These thousand ships are the hands of commerce reaching to every shore. And, proposing this evening to say something concerning this aspect of City Life, I feel that I have not used an inappropriate term, in calling it "The *World* of Traffic." For in this every great

mart not only concentrates the activities, but represents the foremost ideas and the executive power of the world. Surrounded by its symbols and instruments, its peculiar laws, its customs of time immemorial, and its sanctions not always founded in the eternal Right, there stands its throne—and, at the present hour it is the throne of the world. More than anything else now, it absorbs the energies and fills the compass of the world. And so its "merchants are princes, and its traffickers the honorable of the earth."

And if the words of the text thus illustrate this supremacy, in that supremacy also they suggest both evil and good. And, in passing to a consideration of this World of Traffic, in both these phases, I hardly need say that I can but touch upon some of the important topics which it opens for us. This, perhaps, is not the place, if I had the ability, for philosophical disquisition or analysis in the matter. It involves some of the profoundest and most practical problems of the time, the discussion of which, in itself, would occupy a series of discourses. But we are to regard this World of Traffic now, simply as it comes under a moral light; as viewed from the stand-point of religion.

And the first observation I make upon it, regarded from this point of view, is, that, of

course, in itself, it is not an abnormal world—it is not a world outside the Divine sphere; as some would seem to imply, who, summing it up with its dust and its sordidness, its passions and its cares, call it by emphasis "*the* world"—something alien from and antagonistic to religion, and the sanctities of the Spiritual Life. No, my friends, it is a great, appointed field of human endeavor. I say so, because it occupies a large place in the order of Providence, in the history of the world, and in the development of mankind. It springs from the primeval ordinance of Labor, and exists because of the necessity for a *division* of Labor, out of which grows, at once, this system of exchange—of buying and selling. But its conditions are prescribed, not only by this dependence between man and man, but by the very surface of the globe. No region holds a monopoly of the earth's bounty, while each contains something desirable by the rest. And so ensues Commerce, covering the land with moving caravans, and the sea with fleets, developing the sinews of enterprise, and weaving the bands of human communion. How much that pertains to our most common uses, to our ordinary occupations, has come to us from all the diversified regions of the globe. In the streets, in our apartments, upon our tables, meet products from the four quarters of the earth.

Fabrics from the mines of England and the looms of Persia; spices that retain the sting of torrid heat; furs that have been ruffled by the polar blast; gums from aromatic islands far out in distant seas; wood, upon whose boughs has played the light of southern constellations. Nay, look upon a ship, that moving link between hemispheres, its sails breathed upon by every climate, its hull laden from every zone; look upon it confronting the imperious billows, or calmly gliding beneath the moon; consider the intelligence displayed in it, the skill which it employs, the mystic compass that guides it on its track; consider all its instrumentalities, not only material but social, intellectual, moral; and it does not require a vivid imagination to discern in it a Divine Symbol—the expression of a Providential Plan. And so we may consider a thousand other instruments and influences of the World of Traffic; and we shall find, I repeat, that it is not a world alien and opposed to the profoundest realities of the soul, but appointed for its use, and intimately involved with its discipline and its growth. We see how the Church may heave its lofty spire not abruptly even out of Broadway and Wall-street, and how in the mazes of business may be trained the best men and noblest benefactors;—God's own anointed princes and honorable of the earth.

But as in every sphere where moral conditions exist, and man's freedom plays, so in this World of Traffic there is a mixture of good and evil. Let us consider a few illustrations of both.

And, in the first place, I remark, that in this great department of human activity, there is a tendency to make *material interests supreme.* In the market, my friends, a man exposes himself to impositions and losses such as cannot be reckoned by dollars and cents. He is liable to be deluded into the idea that material good is the only good. I mean not that he is brought to confess this with his lips, but to confess it practically; to live as if it were so. Engaged chiefly with that which is visible and tangible; handling wares, estimating property, and beating about in the thick dust of life, he is liable to lose inward perception, and have no standard of estimation but a pecuniary one; so that he will value the very church in which he worships only as a piece of real estate, and have scarcely any associations with it except its market price. He is liable to make business, not only essential—as it is—but all-important—as it is *not;* so that it encroaches upon every sacred season, absorbs all opportunities, exhausts every faculty of his nature, and intersperses the noisy routine of trade merely with the intervals of food and sleep. Even when the Sabbath shuts the gates

of the mart, and unbars the door of Spiritual Realities—a door which for *him* has been closed all the week—he is, perhaps, too weary with the six days' effort to hallow the seventh, spends the hours between a nervous idleness and a lighter foray into the fields of business, looks over old accounts, burns useless papers, or draws the schedule of a contract. There are many men, I fear, who make Sunday answer the purpose of a dull business spell, or a rainy day. They turn over the leaves of the ledger, instead of the bible; mourn not their sins, but their bad debts; and are so busy writing their own letters, that they have no time to read the epistles of Paul. Or, if such a man comes to church, his thoughts wander to his recent or his contemplated purchase. His presence there may be a dead form, but it cannot be said that "there is no *speculation* in his eyes." Or, finding, perhaps, that the themes of the discourse do not weigh in his scales; feeling no particular interest in religion; and conscious that all the stock he has is this side heaven, he falls asleep. But, ah! it is a serious truth, my friends, that the business of the great city too often binds the hearts and souls of men in material interests. In the World of Traffic, in the toil for gain and the splendor of wealth, they are in danger of confounding the ends of life with the means of living. And in such an

age as this, how much is this evil tendency enhanced. When every fresh discovery tends to glorify the outward and the physical; when new regions of the globe open on golden hinges, and unhoard "sumless treasure," and Nature herself becomes a great arsenal of material gain and conquest. Would that this very science, which thus equips and incites man for the exploration and grasping of the outward world, might flash upon him its revelation of what a little, transient world it is; and how, with his counting-room and his iron safe; with his banks and railroads, and factories and warehouses; with New York and London, California and Australia; it all hangs but a golden drop in the immensities of God, in the illimitable immensities that open before the soul. Would it might teach him what an ephemeral atom *he* is in his bodily existence here, for he seems to forget the trite lessons of experience; forgets how the eager feet that trod yonder pavement, and tramped through yonder mart, but a little while ago, are now lying still; and how the hands that clutched for wealth, have dropped it all; and how, with every fresh date he sets down in his day-book, he is unconsciously summing up the time when he shall be as they are, and his vanishing from the street and the exchange, perhaps,

scarcely more noticed than the breaking of a bubble in the stream.

I do not, of course, mean to hint that the present world should be too much darkened by the penumbra of the other, or that we need halt in our diligence because we deal with perishable interests. This side of things has its argument, we all know, and the proper qualifications are readily supplied; but I say now, that this is one of the great evil influences in the World of Traffic; we are liable there to accept transient for permanent good; to overlook the ends for which we work, and the vast relations with which we are involved, even in the most ordinary attitudes of life. Objects close to the eye, shut out much larger objects on the horizon; and splendors born only of the earth, eclipse the stars. So a man sometimes covers up the entire disc of eternity with a dollar, and quenches transcendent glories with a little shining dust.

It is another evil in the World of Traffic, that it establishes a dynasty of *Secondary Principles.* I alluded to this tendency in the previous discourse, but I wish to dwell upon it a little longer. In making haste to be rich, a man finds himself impeded by scruples, and is tempted to pursue a course which, while it does not lie under the constraint of any human law, runs athwart the divine.

"Honesty is the best policy:" this is a recognized maxim in the World of Traffic; but it is not so readily perceived there, that this term "policy" has a definition as abstract as it is noble—meaning, the income of God's awards, and not merely the quick profit of barter and sale; and that "honesty" has attributes which carry it deeper than any *overt* act. In this business-world, a good many set up a standard that slants a little from the divine perpendicular. I cannot see how the circumstances, as some seem to think, create an *excuse* for this; but I do see how they create the *temptation*. The operations of trade may sharpen the intellect, but they are apt to cloud the moral sense. It is hard work to read the moral law straight through the double lens of twelve per cent. interest; and a man will find some way to hitch his conscience to the train of a profitable transaction, and keep it running in the grooves of a thriving business. Men reason correctly enough about abstractions, but the World of Traffic is a very concrete world, and the finer faculties of the soul are damaged by incessant dealing with things gross and palpable. People there look out for the *proceeds*—for what will *pay;* and by the same principle that makes "a nimble sixpence better than a slow shilling," that which is heavy, and chinks in the hand, weighs more than two or three scru-

ples of conscience, and several texts in the Bible. There are some, it is true, who *profess* no higher morality than this; who lay down the proposition that life is a scramble, and that he fulfils the end of living best who clutches the most. These, however, preserve a claim to consistency at the expense of their reasoning faculties, and occupy the same place in moral, as those philosophers do in physical science, who insist that the only difference between humanity and the brute, is one of organic development, and that man is merely an accomplished ape. The mass of people, however, even in the sordid city, have faith in their moral instincts, but the difficulty is, these are not cultivated; they are stinted and overlaid by selfish and material interests. Go to any man in the street, and ask him if it would be right to manufacture and sell a poison, so seductive in its disguises, yet so fatal in its operation, that it should delude thousands and slay hundreds, and at once he cries out "No!" yet he eats and sleeps over exactly that sort of business; and next to the very column in the newspaper, that is fairly red with the awful announcement of "murder and suicide caused by intemperance," stands his own advertisement of "a fine stock of brandy, and some choice old wines." Ask another, if he believes in the essential brotherhood of the race? and he says "Yes!" Ask

him if those whom God has crowned with immortality, and over whom Christ's blood has trickled, are not too precious to be prized in dollars and cents? and, if the latent Christianity within him will speak, there is no doubt as to what he will reply; but apply your proposition to a certain "*exciting* topic," and you will find that the sharp self-interest which shaves four per cent. a month, clips likewise the finer nerves of humanity, and that *that* matter, "is a very different thing."

In the World of Traffic, my friends, the intellect is keener than the moral sense. Men do not act directly against their perceptions of duty, but are unconscious how much those perceptions are blunted by a near interest and a tangible good. A great deal has been done by trade and commerce for civilization, for freedom, intelligence, and religion; but a great deal, too, against these. Justice has not always marched side by side with achievement. In the track of enterprise around the globe, there are marks of violence and spots of blood; and while in so many ways it has led the march of progress, in others, at the present hour, it is the most stubborn obstacle that blocks the road.

But the World of Traffic exhibits another phase of evil, in the fact that it is an *overcrowded* sphere. "Its merchants are princes, and its traffickers the honorable of the earth," and we see the deference

paid to this conception, in the prevalence of the notion, that to be a member of the commercial world is a higher grade of nobility than to be a toiler in the field of productive labor. Young men, brought up in the pure air and among the hills, will not stay upon the bosom of nature; the rumble and glitter of the metropolis reaches them in their retirement, promising fortune, distinction, and ease, and they rush into the conventionalities and unsubstantialities of the town. They quit the sphere of creative work for that of barter; a mere shifting from hand to hand of what somebody else has made; so crowded, in proportion to the other, that community has become like a reversed pyramid; they quit the fields, where they might make the grass grow, and increase the abundance of corn, to lean over counters, to stifle at writing-desks, and, too often, to throw themselves away in the tide of dissipation; to break down in fortune, to live and die in the endless, tantalizing chase of experiment. And all this, because the business of the Trader is thought to be more noble than the sweaty toil of the Producer. It is a great mistake. If there are any genuine distinctions, over and above those of character—and I do not believe there are—then he who makes a thing is greater than he who passes it to and fro and speculates upon it. He who utters a new thought, who

tempts out a new ear of corn, or in any way adds to the substance of good in the world, deserves a richer patent of nobility, than he who reiterates other men's conclusions, or lives upon other men's bread. And see in a great city like this, what clusters starve and shiver like half-frozen bees around a hive. See the pauperism that leans up against industry with impudent reliance, or lies down in despair. Consider the unanswered clamors for employment, and the faintness of thousands "out of place." And yet here is a broad land, whose virgin acres can banquet a world; here are prairies unbroken by the ploughshare; here are hill-slopes swelling with promise; here are thick woods, awaiting the axe of the pioneer and the footsteps of the emigrant. Talk of "the manifest destiny" of our country, as consisting in melodramatic expeditions with the stars and stripes through the world at large! Our *Providential* destiny unfolds itself in this ample and goodly land, stretching deep and far away, out of whose untried recesses comes an appeal to those who in the World of Traffic droop and perish, inviting them to convert soil and sinew into food, to add to the real substance of the land, to pour fresh streams of productiveness into these channels of business, and to grow *men*.

As it is, great is the moral significance, far-

reaching are the moral results which grow out of this exuberance in the World of Traffic. Hence—for I can merely name them—come competition, with its artifices and its injuries to conscience; and extravagance, with its pretensions and its guilt; and the frauds that are engendered in the selfish crush and jostle; and the moral curse that accompanies the haste to be rich.

But from these phases of the great World of Traffic, we will turn to consider—though more briefly—its better and more hopeful aspects.

And, in the first place, it may be observed that this activity and intelligence indicates a condition of material and individual *freedom*. A community which really thrives in all the departments of its industry, must be, essentially, a free community. Despotism prevails more where men do not feel that they have much at stake in the country, and where their faculties have not been aroused. But the toil of enterprise, and the sense of possession, develope a consciousness of personality which resists encroachment and chafes under oppression. And, therefore, however aggressive upon the liberty of others, commerce nourishes the sentiment of liberty in those who wield it, and Trade and Wealth assert themselves against the exclusiveness of caste and privilege. The great revolutions of the last two centuries were precipitated

by assaults on property. Liberal ideas and popular tendencies were involved, but the immediate form which they assumed was resistance to oppressive taxation. And, although we know that profounder revolutions are to be wrought in the world, and more universal interests secured, we rejoice in the *direction* of these movements; and, wherever we behold a great, industrious, enterprising city, like this, we recognize something besides material prosperity; we discover that individual and national independence with which are bound up so many blessings and so many moral consequences.

But I observe, again, that the World of Traffic is a symbol and an assurance of *human progress*. This is the age of the money-power; and, whatever evils may be involved with it, it is an advance upon the ages of physical prowess and brute force. We shall hardly see any more "Wars of Succession," or any more conflicts about the Divine Right of Kings; but an ague-fit in the Bank of England, or in Wall-street, sets the whole world a shaking; and, if you would discover the most sensitive and powerful interest of the day, consult the barometer of the stocks. Traffic sometimes breeds wars, but everybody knows that its real interests lie in the maintenance of peace. The great battles of the day are battles of enterprise.

The strife is not between armed fleets, but whose ships shall come first from China, or sail the quickest around the stormy Cape. Feudal customs, where they yet linger, are regarded as so many creaking puppet-shows. The heraldic banners are dropping to tatters; the devices on the shields are growing rusty; plain "Mr." crowds upon "Sir," and "My Lord." The cotton-spinners of England control its policy. The monarchs of the present are not Nicholases and Josephs, but Rothschilds and Barings; men like Morse and Fulton, are their kings at arms; and the sovereign-power of the time builds itself "crystal palaces." For, "Its merchants are princes, its traffickers the honorable of the earth."

And, close in connection with this phase of the World of Traffic, is that which it presents to the eye of the philanthropist and the Christian, as the *instrument* of ends beyond itself. It is indeed cheering to think that this far-reaching enterprise and colossal achievement of our time, is leveling the mountains, and exalting the valleys, and preparing a highway for the Lord. Good is stronger than evil in the world; and these agents of Trade and Commerce are opening unprecedented facilities for the operation of Christianity. "Mountains intervening," oceans rolling between, need "make enemies of nations" no more. Quick as

thought throbs the communion of man with man along the electric wire. A thousand steam-paddles, like the stroke of hammers, are welding continents together. And the very air that wraps the globe may yet become a current of reciprocity and a binding web of love. Go among the shipyards, the machine-shops, the docks of this great city, and the World of Traffic may suggest to you something more than material good. Think, wherever it sends out its influence, there ideas will circulate and truth go abroad. Think, how the nations who control that World of Traffic are those to whom liberty is indigenous; and who alone, of all the earth, illustrate its benefits. Think, how the language that is becoming the master-speech of the world; the language uttered by those new-born colonies that are blossoming around the globe; the language that peals through speaking-trumpets on distant seas, is the language of the Declaration of Independence; and that, wherever the keels of our commerce cut their way, there go the intelligence, the freedom, the inherent justice of the English tongue. And, moreover, if you have any moral discernment, behold the Providential Purpose manifest in this combination of mighty interests with mighty forces. Think of the capabilities which are unfolded in all this mechanism and enterprise. Think of the

perilous way and the long ages through which God has brought the Gospel; and say if this is to render no service to *that*—if the World of Traffic does not put on a moral grandeur as you gaze—if there is not a meaning in its stir and its strength, glorious as the hopes, pregnant as the prayers of all good men; and if its expanding greatness, and its leaping forces, do not seem as the buddings of Religious Prophecy.

Yes, so I would regard it; as an agent and an indication of far better things—as one method in the Providence of that Being to whom a thousand years are as one day, and who, as He has built up the planet on which we dwell, epoch by epoch, so through developments which only to *our* vision seem slow or hindered, surely leads forward the progress of the race and the manifestation of His own Glory.

But the World of Traffic has a still more solemn significance for each of us, when we recognize it as the sphere of our individual discipline. And this is a fact which I wish I could impress upon every man, in his counting-room, his work-shop, or wherever may be the field of his endeavor. This, my friend, is your appointed place, not merely to acquire money, or gain a living, but to achieve the highest moral ends. It has perils, but these you are not to run away from; you are to en-

counter and overcome them. It is filled with obstructions and temptations, but it affords opportunities for virtue, and for religion, that are rich in proportion to the difficulty which they involve; and in this point of view, it is better for you than the solitude of the country, or the abstraction of the cloister. It is a great world, this World of Traffic, in material splendor and achievement, in its power, and its influence. Those who are successful in it; those who take rank among its great and powerful ones, are estimated as the princes and honorable of the earth. But it is far greater in its moral significance—in its opportunities for spiritual achievement, in the permanent good that may be extracted from it, and the victory which may be gained in it; and, my hearers, if while you act in it you are more solicitious about character than wealth, eternity than time, the ends of life than the means of living; if all that is really of value in it you assimilate to the enduring faculties of the soul, then in the rarest, in the only real sense, you will be princes and honorable in the earth.

Many of you, it is likely, will here fulfil your mortal term. Among these wheels and hammers will be wrought the substance of your moral being. Among these currents of trade and commerce, you will conduct transactions either with sin, or

with God. Among these factories will be woven the fabric of your character. In these counting-rooms will be added up the sum-total of your life. Through the tumult of this World of Traffic you will hear the last call, and, shaking off its dusty garments, you will render up your stewardship.

THE DOMINION OF FASHION.

III.

THE DOMINION OF FASHION.

——The chains, and the bracelets, and the mufflers, the bonnets .... the rings .... the changeable suits of apparel, and the mantles, and the wimples, and the crisping-pins, the glasses, and the fine linen, and the hoods, and the vails.

ISAIAH III. 19–23.

THESE are not munitions of war, nor the devices of some royal pageant; but they are the symbols of a power that has gone over the world with more than a conqueror's success, and that maintains a sway wider than any king. It has a code of its own, and signs, and passports. Its honors, by many, are esteemed the highest felicity, and its ban is more dreaded by them than a monarch's frown. It has a wonderful control over the outward life of men; and, with all their diverse peculiarities, and their individual wills, shapes them into subservient platoons. It rules courts; it makes a common law for nations; and shares with Trade and Commerce a place in the foreground of the great metropolis.

And the pomp and luxury which the Prophet so minutely specifies in the passage before us, show how ancient is its reign. The text, indeed, affords one of those revelations which abridge history, and tell us how little humanity changes in its generalities, even in three thousand years, and how constantly the old repeats itself in the new. With very slight alteration, these words might pass as those of some contemporary speaker, describing the processions of the street, or the groups of a ball-room.

Yes, the tendency always has been as it is, to refine upon the original expressions of nature, and to govern it by some rule of art. Side by side with civilization advances luxury, and the preacher, who, in considering the moral aspects of the city, dwells upon its material greatness and activity, is compelled, because of the existence of these very facts, to notice also the *Dominion of Fashion.*

And yet it is not an easy subject to handle here, and at this time. With the best that can be said for it, it exposes so many weaknesses, and presents so many salient points of ridicule, which have often been and still ought to be delineated, that there is a temptation to convert the discourse of the Sabbath and the pulpit into something that would be better, perhaps, as a lyceum-satire. I trust, however, that we shall be able to find the

moral suggestions which are afforded by the topic of this evening, in considering some of the features, or characteristics of this Dominion of Fashion.

I observe, then, in the first place, that it is the dominion of *conventionalism* over *nature*. And this dominion is, by no means entirely unlawful. There is a sense in which men cannot exactly *improve*, but assist, nature, and yet not be chargeable with the presumption of trying "to gild the fine gold, or paint the lily." Nay, what is that method which makes the gold fine, but an artificial work that brings out its full richness and beauty from the roughness of the ore? So the entire process of education is the refining and bringing out of a man's faculties from the original ore. And in this process, surely, good breeding has its place—that kind of culture, which, although it may add nothing to the intrinsic substance of the mind, or the heart, enables one properly to adjust himself to others, and to add to the stock of agreeableness in society. There is something very fine in the polish and ripeness of a true gentleman;—

"The grand old name of gentleman,"

as the poet has it—

"The grand old name of gentleman,
Defamed by every charlatan,
And soiled with all ignoble use;—"

not only in his own flexibility, but in the art with which he sets others at ease, and calls out the best that is in them; and it shows us the value of mere accomplishments. There are men in the world, on the other hand, of decided talents and many excellent qualities, whose influence is greatly abridged by their uncouthness and incivility. Their qualities are sheathed in a porcupine crust. Their want of facility, of tact, in one word, of adaptedness, renders them unpleasant persons in society, and though we admire their abilities and their worth, they are so rude and cynical that we dread them. But little good is derived from the company of a highly intellectual wolf, or a moral bear. Next in importance to acting, is the method of acting; and manner is power.

There is a class of people, too, who abhor ceremony so intensely, that they fall into rudeness; which, in some instances, is as much a piece of affectation as any custom of etiquette. Not only would they have every disagreeable fact seen just as it is, but, for fear it will not be seen, thrust it foremost. They do not simply tell you all your faults, but tell them in the bluntest way; and, lest you should have too good conceit of yourself, they use the privilege of friendship to give your complacency a kick. They discharge their consciences with a pugilistic vigor. Forgetting that truth not

only *can* be, but *should* be, spoken in love, they utter it in such a way that, instead of impressing with conviction, it only rankles as a barb of insult. Their sincerity is an offensive nakedness, and their frankness impudence.

Now, so far as Fashion, sparing a man's integrity, and leaving all his faculties free scope, disciplines him into an agreeable manner, and lends to his speech a genial courtesy, it has a lawful influence. And I hope I shall not be misunderstood when I say, that in our nature there is a certain instinct of luxury even, which indicates a legitimate use. Those tastes which cherish and develop the fine arts, which attach themselves to the beautiful and the graceful, and from the raw material of things draw out softer textures, and more exquisite expressions, assuredly have their sphere. And these can operate best in those conditions of refinement and leisure which exist peculiarly under the dominion of Fashion. And consider, too, what many of these customs, which come under the denomination of luxury, accomplish for others. What a source of extra employment to thousands is the magnificent dwelling, or the rich garment, and divers other things which are not sheer necessaries of life, but which money, and custom, and culture, call into existence.

The Conventionalism of Fashion, then, as distin-

guished from nature, and overlying it, is not all an evil. But that there *is* great evil involved with it—falsehood, meanness, harm—I hardly need say. See, for instance, in the Dominion of Fashion, what a violation there is of *physical law:* and surely this is not an improper topic to be touched upon in the pulpit. Nay, my friends, far otherwise. From the sacred desk there should be more open and strenuous speaking upon this point. For the physical law is also God's law—the expression of His Intention the enactment of His Will. It has had no set place of proclamation, no vocal utterance. But its administration is abroad on the pure air of heaven, and its decrees are in the light. It is not engraved on tables of stone, but its sanctions are in every part of your wonderful, throbbing organism; in the currents of the blood, the hand-writing of the nerves, and the tablets of the lungs. While you obey it, its mystery works on, with serene unconsciousness, affording that pleasure which there is in bare existence itself; in the play of muscle and the equal pulse of health; in full deep breathing, and sweet sleep, and the exhilaration of the sunshine and the air. But violate it, and the relentless consequences will tell you how sacred and how divine it is. Saying nothing now of the moral and intellectual interests that are involved, that violation is a physical injury, and

a sin *because* it is a physical injury. And when custom does not assist nature but abuse it, it is no lawful dominion, but a usurpation.

And need I tell you in what ways, especially in great cities, Fashion does abuse Nature? The substitution of night for day, the stifling rooms, the thin garments which are the sacrifice of health to vanity, the compressed lungs, the protracted excitement, the late meal, the indescribable food seasoned with every kind of disease, the wine that heats the blood and dishevels the faculties, and the numerous instances in which the mufflers, and the bonnets, the hoods, and the mantles, and the changeable suits of apparel, are not merely expressions of grace or courtesy, but symbols of rebellion.

And, under the Dominion of Fashion, not only is conventionalism exalted over Nature in the violation of physical law, but of absolute beauty and wholesome tastes. It is the lawless and often ridiculous rule of caprice, controlling people, though, with a rigor which they dare not disregard. Would any pure instinct, if left to itself, induce men and women to assume such outrageous garbs and shapes as frequently are witnessed in the van of fashion? Such distortions and discomforts, canonizing deformities, and exaggerating defects, and marring genuine nature. Men we see, so gorgeous and so disguised, that they look like walking chambers of

imagery, or cylindrical chess-boards, and we know not whether we behold a party of gentlemen or the intrusion of a menagerie; while on the other side appear those animated pictures—*not* painted in oils, however—who have twisted their fair forms beyond any definition of anatomy. These would regard with surprise and amusement the savage who bores his nose, or paints rainbows around his eyes, and yet he has only succumbed to another phase of the same Dominion of Fashion. With all his self-torturing and tattooing, however, his way of rendering allegiance is, on the whole, more comfortable; and I am inclined to think evinces full as much taste.

But besides these outward and manifest usurpations, Conventionalism often, by the power of Fashion, represses and kills the natural emotions of the heart. Everything must be done by the rules of etiquette. A hearty laugh is vulgar, and even mourning must go on by pattern. Sometimes, to be sure, there may occur periods of literary affectation, or drenching sentimentalism—a distilled compound of Werter and Rousseau, from which almost anything is a deliverance; but generally I suspect a languid repose, an indifference that is not to be penetrated by any surprise, is the standard. Nothing is to be marvelled at, nothing is to awaken a fresh gush of admiration and enthu-

siasm, or break the frigid apathy of contempt. Probably this, in many instances, ensues from an exhausted capacity for pleasure, which has been exercised so intensely in its pursuit that everything loses zest—the world really *does* become worn out, and reveals nothing new—at least from that plane of life. At any rate, no one can deny the heartlessness, the constraining and deadening forms which prevail in this mode of life, nor wonder that people of a genial, spontaneous nature, should be glad to escape from its routine, break over its barriers, and never make very fashionable men. For I am speaking now, it will be recollected, not of refinement, not of real gentility, or high breeding, but of Fashion, which is often neither good sense nor good manners.

And, with this repression of natural feeling, come that frivolous formality, those tedious, lying compliments, that masked insincerity, that meagre sumptuousness and cold splendor, in which the satirist finds his materials, and which differs from sweet and kindly courtesy, as glittering frost-work differs from glittering dew. It may seem that I am pursuing a train of discussion beyond the warrant of the place and the time; but really, my friends, whatever is injurious, capricious, insincere —in one word, essentially unnatural—is immoral and irreligious. There are customs, there are moral

consequences involved in this world of Conventionalism. It implies a disregard of truth, a selfishness, a shallow conception of life, which the preacher ought to expose, and which he has a right to speak against. When I think what slavery is proclaimed by these chains and bracelets; what silly caprices ordain these changeable suits of apparel; how much good substantial nature is smothered in these mufflers and tortured by these crisping-pins; indeed in what a miserable machinery thousands are living; I think one may subserve a moral purpose by launching at it a shaft of ridicule, or a bolt of condemnation.

But I observe, in the second place, that the Dominion of Fashion, is the dominion of the *External* over the *Personal*. And here, again, let us discern some benefit, and acknowledge a lawful influence.

> "Ground in yonder social mill,"

says the poet,

> "We rub each other's angles down,
> And merge . . . in form and gloss,
> The picturesque of man and man;"

and surely, in some respects, it is well that it is so. In order that a man may preserve his integrity, it is not necessary that he should retain those hard granitic corners that fit into no social system, and

either encroach upon others or keep them at a distance. Fashion, as a common curve of propriety which a man cannot with decency overstep—a circle of custom which outlaws disagreeable eccentricities—has a wholesome sway. Society is itself a compromise of individualities, and no one has any business in it who cannot reasonably conform. A man has no right to be *outre*, and to poke his personality in every body's way. A studied revolt from general customs is often an affectation equal to any that walks in chains and bracelets; and one may be as vain of being *out* of the fashion as of being *in* it. It is a repetition of Diogenes on Plato's carpet; and the fop is little else than a cynic turned inside out.

Nor, in saying that Fashion exalts the external over the *personal*, do I mean to say that it represses *egotism*, which is a very different thing from individual steadfastness, and sometimes manifests itself extremely the other way. A vain man is not one with a dignified consciousness of his own personality; but rather one with a nervous solicitude about himself—a fear that he shall not be noticed enough, with a half-suspicion that he may be a sham, a counterfeit, and, therefore, an extra endeavor that his chink and jingle shall be heard in the world. A man of real, intrinsic power does not advertise it with ribbons and stars and velvets.

The Napoleon inside the plain grey surtout outshines all the coronation robes. Personality, then—individual integrity—is a different thing from egotism. And I say it is an evil influence in the Dominion of Fashion, that it seduces, or forces a man from an honorable loyalty to himself. In other words, Fashion is the science of appearances, and it inspires one with the desire to *seem* rather than to *be*. He must live in the same style as his neighbors—his house must be as fine, as richly furnished, as luxuriously kept. *Imitation*, especially in the city, is the source of more misery and wrong, than almost anything else that can be named. The fear of losing caste, and of what the people will say, and the wish to be reported gay, munificent, rich,—does not the great evil which stares one in the face as he looks around upon this metropolis—the great sin and shame of *extravagance*—take its rise in this? For we are an extravagant community. It is a time of peace and of luxury, and men must rise into notice by their way of living. One builds an elegant mansion, and another must outstrip him. One is distinguished by a splendid vehicle, and another drives the fastest horses. It is expected that you will be awed before the presence that blazes with diamonds, and confess the sovereignty that astonishes a watering-place with its parade and profusion.

It is useless to say that a good deal of this is really vulgar; I merely observe that it is the way of distinction—it is the fashion, and tempts men to be untrue to their convictions—untrue to themselves. For where there is one who can support this display, very likely there are ten who can't, and yet who feel that they must to keep up appearances—and who scrimp necessaries to affect luxuries, content with a thin gilding so long as it looks like gold, or else who launch out in a ruinous splendor. And not only ruinous, but when tried by the social law, how unjust! Now, I have already said that there is a lawful sphere of refinement, and even of luxury. Let there be stately mansions, elegant apartments, choice furniture. Let there be parlors that shall be studios of esthetic beauty, and breathe the inspiration of sculpture and of picture. I must confess, I have but little respect for what a good many people call "Economy"—I do not mean the legitimate thing, but as they illustrate it—for *as* they illustrate it, it is certainly one of the *shabbiest* of the virtues. This glorification of *saving*, as though saving were good for anything except noble ends and uses—this dollar and cent conception of the great universe—this piling up and packing away of money, and sending it out in investments to see it roll back again in doubled bulk—merely to say—"I am

worth so much,"—look at this marvelous, threadbare, scrimping virtue of *saving;* for no earthly, and certainly for no spiritual end—and then all the while living in a meagre, pent-up way, when they might create all around them such a world of suggestion, and beauty, and noble culture, and high aims, and make their money worth something to themselves, and pay interest when they are done with all banks and real estate—I say this affair, which some miscall "Economy," seems to me, to have about as much glory in it, and about as much benefit, as there is in the occupation of boys scooping sand out of a beach, and piling it up in heaps.

And yet, I would not, by a single hint, favor the other extreme. I say, on the contrary, that here is a profuse expenditure, running beyond all the bounds of refined and elegant living, which no one, whatever his means, has a right to indulge, so long, at least, as there are such sharp contrasts in society.

The rampant extravagance of the city, is not only fearful, as prophetic of the crash that must follow the strain, but one feels that, somewhere, there must be a sacrilegious wrong, when the sap of so much social benefit is concentrated in the flowering of a selfish luxury; something incongruous in this magnificence girdled with ghastliness; this

black eclipse impinging upon the orb of prosperity; this sharp contact of apoplexy and consumption; this Want that crouches by marble steps and stretches out its leanness in the wintry star-light. Society thus looks like a huge ship, with music, and feasting, and splendor on its deck, and its sails all set and glistening, while down in the hold there are famine, and pestilence, and compressed agony, and silent, choking despair.

There is more than ruin, then, there is injustice, there is fraud, there is inexpressible wrong, in that extravagance which is the strain of vanity to keep up appearances—the determination, let what may suffer, to be in the fashion. And surely, then, it is one of the bad influences of this Dominion of Fashion, that its externals are so attractive as to seduce men from their integrity, their self-esteem, the resources of character, into the insensible career of imitation, feeling that not in the fashion they are nothing.

It is obvious that there are *other* ways in which this influence operates, besides leading to the extravagance upon which I have dwelt. How this deference to externals may cause a man to smother his convictions, and speak untrue words, and perform wrong deeds, which a proper self-regard would never let him do! So that his personality, so to speak, becomes entirely loose, and floats this

way and that, according to the social currents around him; so that we have in fashionable society no original, individual developments, but a silken and gilded monotony.

Ah! the moral injury wrought, and the sin committed, when the outward rules the inward, and the solicitations of the world overcome spiritual laws; when a man lives only for appearances; and cares not *what* he is, but what he *seems* to be. The root of all genuine principle is dead then. Your chains and your bracelets then may all look very fine, and your rings, and your changeable suits of apparel; but what have they cost! Jewels torn from the soul in virtues and in an individual consciousness, the barter of which is the dearest bargain a man ever made.

I observe, finally,—although this proposition embraces what has just been said,—that the Dominion of Fashion is the dominion of the *Sensuous*, or *Superficial*, over the *Moral* and the *Enduring*. I have said, that it is the Science of Appearances. It disciplines the manners, it prescribes the dress, and presides over the external arrangements of life. And I have indicated, in some respects, the beneficial office which it thus discharges. But it should be remembered, that the things with which it deals are not, in any sense, *vital;* they do not belong to the substance of being; they are but its

shows, and transient forms. And yet *in* these shows and forms, thousands plant their hopes and spend their energies. Custom is their religion; Fashion becomes the supreme law, and they plead it for what they do or neglect to do. Custom, I say, is their religion; Observance their worship; and the chains, and the bracelets, and the rings, and the glasses, and the fine linen, are their idols. They are absorbed in the glitter, they are swept away upon the surface of life. Therefore, there is no introspection, no scrutinizing of their own hearts; there is no moral reference, no conception of the meaning of existence, and of the solemn realities involved with it. Sorrow finds them without any support, and death comes, a ghastly intruder, striking the wine-cup from their hands.

Thus it is, my friends, that Fashion in itself alone, is not really high-breeding, or genuine culture, but sensuous refinement—an education of the eye, the ear, the palate, and, in general, a fastidious voluptuousness. And so, drawing away all the sap from the spiritual roots of a man's being, and concentrating it in the faculties of sensual enjoyment, we discover the reason why moral decay always accompanies extreme fashion, and luxury and enervation go together. It has been the rule in other places—I will not press the question whether it is so here—that fashionable society is

the most corrupt society. Gross vice may prevail more in the lowest class, but there is a pressure of necessity there, an energy of passion, that really renders it less abominable than the accomplished frivolity and epicureanism that rots as it shines. And fashionable society, I do not say always, but too commonly, is full of this.

Herein also—in the exaltation of sensual enjoyment over moral claims—may be found the springs of the selfishness and indifference which characterize the Dominion of Fashion. The effect of example, and the relations of humanity, are disregarded in the zest of individual gratification. It cannot be denied, that the most stubborn obstacle to all reform, to all hopeful and humane movement, exists in the customs of what are called "the upper classes." Shut in by gilding and velvet from the inclement realities of life, their ears do not hear the sounds of woe, their eyes do not see the ghastliness and abomination, their hearts do not feel the electricity of the common humanity Opportunity, indulgence, pampered selfishness, separate them in thought and in sympathy from the great multitude, so that the cry of complaint, and the jar of crime, are but the noise of a rabble, and the appeal of the philanthropist only a fanatic's scream. I must say, once more, that I am not speaking of the truly refined, the gentle, the rich,

among whom so often prevails the noblest recognition of these social claims; but of those who are body and soul the subjects of Fashion; who live only by its rules and for its ends. And I say that among these, sensual enjoyment, and selfish objects, are apt to supersede moral obligations, and clog the march of human progress.

And, finally, how the sense of Religious truth, of personal responsibility and spiritual ends in life, is absorbed in this outside glitter and attitude! How time is wasted, and strength misemployed, and God forgotten, and the soul neglected! Ah! my friends, the words of the Prophet may have seemed almost trivial to you, when I quoted them as my text. But when we look at them more considerately, there is very solemn suggestion in them. Those rings and bonnets, and glasses and bracelets, how much solicitude did they awaken, in the days to which these words refer! To how many were they the supreme objects of life! How many bosoms heaved under them; how many bright eyes flashed brighter on account of them; how regal, how triumphant, did beauty appear in them, because of the homage which they secured, and the pride which they gratified! But, for ages those bosoms have been still, those eyes quenched, that beauty ashes. And the rich apparel, and the ornaments, are but the symbols of curious and vanished cus-

toms. But still here is the same solicitude, the same vanity, the same idolizing of material forms, the same living for perishable ends. Here, also, is the same spiritual nature, urging its more enduring interests—the same Infinite Excellence presenting its supreme claims. And, while the past and the present assure us that custom may have its forms, and fashion its sphere; the departed, from those memorials once so gaudy, but now so quaint and solemn, and our own souls from their innermost depths, protest against all that dries up the noblest springs of our humanity, or usurps the control of Heaven.

THE CIRCLE OF AMUSEMENT.

IV.

THE CIRCLE OF AMUSEMENT.

To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven.

Ecclesiastes iii. 1.

We may understand the text as a statement of *Fact*, or a statement of *Law;* a declaration of things as existing by human action, or by Divine appointment; of what God ordains, or what man finds the opportunity to do. The world is governed. It is bound about by limitations, and moves in the orbit of a Supreme intention. There are certain grand elements of existence, certain original features in every form of life, which are not at human disposal, but bear the stamp of Creative ordinance. There is a time to be born, a moment when, without conscious action of our own, we are summoned into this marvelous existence, and become the inheritors of its responsibilities. There is a time to die; a crisis which man may retard, which he may hasten, but which with inevitable footsteps *comes*, to seal up all these faculties, and

to stop the heart. And between these barriers of life plays many a force, glides to and fro many a dispensation, higher and profounder than our reach.

Nevertheless, inside this Supreme Government, scope is left for man's agency—a time for every purpose of his heart, a season for every work of his hand. Yes, sad as the truth is, there is a period for all the sin of his nature to ripen, and it *does* unfold. There is a time for falsehood to achieve its end, and for fraud to work its plot. There is a time for Usurpation to sit upon its throne, and War to shake out violence and death from the folds of its crimson banner. And, whether we contemplate this harmony of Providence moving calmly on, with its evolving issues and its fixed plan; or these human activities, so often jarring and dislocated; in either instance we may say—"To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."

But, my friends, in reality there is a *relation* between these phenomena of Fact and of Law—these Divine ordinances and these human activities—which resolves the text into one general declaration. It is, in short, the relation of *Use* and *Abuse*. We may understand the words before us as declaring a fitness in the *intention* of things. Everything has, or indicates, an original use. It may itself be a deformity or disease, neverthe-

less it illustrates a Law; just as a diseased organ, or a deformed limb, illustrates a Law. So, when any abuse prevails in human action, though the abuse is itself wrong, and the agent guilty, we shall find somewhere back of it an intention, a faculty, an original ground, of which it is the perversion, but which is intrinsically good. The generic fact of sin is the abuse of free-agency. The element of selfishness in the world is the abuse of a wise instinct. And, sometimes, not only the *degree*, but the *kind*, of a thing, is itself an abuse. Thus, while some would say that intemperance is an abuse of intoxicating drinks, and, therefore, argue that these have a use; I should say that intemperance is an abuse in degree of the appetite of thirst, and the mere use of intoxicating drinks as a *beverage*, an abuse in kind, just as the use of any other insidious poison as a drink, would be an abuse in kind. But thirst itself, as an original quality of our nature, has its good purpose and its season.

This, then, is the proposition which I draw from the text—that there is a fitness in the original intention of things, and that intention may be traced back even from an abuse. Every abuse signifies some use. The application of this principle to the subject that specially comes before us this evening, is obvious.

In the first discourse of this series, I remarked,

that the City represents the individual man—both the good and the evil that are in him. There, projected on a grand scale, are the symbols of all his appetites, his faculties, and his instincts; and, agreeably to the principle just laid down, these are traceable in the abuse as well as in the use. Amidst the pomps of Fashion, and the restless tides of Traffic, the *Circle of Amusement* kindles its lights, and puts forth its solicitations. And, abused as it is, especially in the great metropolis, both in degree and in kind, still it is a *Fact* related to some *Law*—it symbolizes some original intention in our nature. I am aware that, taking the etymology of the word *Amusement*, as that which merely detains the mind in a sort of aimless loitering, an argument may be urged against its lawfulness in any degree. But I employ the term in its general acceptation. And need I say that it has a lawful sphere —has its wise purport and its proper season? Indeed, it may be said, "there is no fear that men will err on this side; the great danger is at the other extreme, and the pulpit, if it speaks at all upon the subject, had better direct its energies to that point." To which I reply, that undoubtedly there is great danger; and I hope that, before I conclude this discourse, I shall not be found unfaithful in regard to it; but it appears to me that one vital element in this *abuse*, grows out of the failure

to properly recognize the *use*—especially on the part of the pulpit and of religion. At any rate, I have no confidence in the expediency of an error, and believe that the point of a good argument is often blunted by exaggeration. Now, if either directly or inferentially we deny the lawfulness of all amusement, or refuse it fair scope, we simply confound the use with the abuse; we press against an original tendency which will break out, and when it does break out, finding no landmark of just discrimination, it goes where it will. All represented as alike bad, are alike indifferent. Give sufficient scope to gunpowder, and it will play off harmlessly; cram it too tight, and it will burst the gun. Nothing can be worse than to unduly multiply the catalogue of sins, so that one is hedged in with restrictions, and can hardly take a step without thinking that he does wrong. For, when once he violates conscience, whether by actual or by fancied transgression, his moral sentiment is dislocated, so to speak, and in the reckless sense of guilt, he is as likely to commit a real fault as an unreal one. But we erect a strong barrier against evil-doing, when we show that all true good, all genuine enjoyment, lies in the path of virtue—when we make it plain that sin is unnecessary.

These observations apply especially to young men in the city. For, in the first place, Amusement

here is especially needed. Work, in the country, is blended with many sources of delight. The laborer sows his grain and binds his sheaves in the glorious theatre of Nature. Her beautiful forms unfold before his eyes, her changing liveries diversify his landscape, and her sweet songs throb among the pulses of his toil. But, in the city, shut up with bales and boxes; or in the din of the work-shop; the requisite contrast lies apart from the field of labor. And then, in the city, evil amusements are more intimately associated with the good, and, perhaps, predominate. Now, when his day's work is ended, the young man feels the need of relaxation. He follows the impulse; and, if he has been taught to regard all such indulgences as sinful, or at least as a dangerous compromise, he thinks of no distinction, but rushes to that which most immediately attracts his senses or tempts his passions. Whereas, had the proper discrimination been taught him, he would have found his *evil* choice opposed by at least one more barrier of conscience,—and it might have been a saving barrier.

I am not so sure, then, that there is no danger of encroaching upon the lawful sphere of amusement, nor will I suffer any fear of misrepresentation to prevent me from asserting that sphere. There are *degrees* of amusement that are gross

abuses; there are *kinds* of amusement that, tried by any moral standard, are wrong; but amusement itself, relaxation, recreation, call it what you will, finds ground in original faculties or tendencies of our nature. Look at it for a moment. Are not provisions made for the genial play of humor, and the flashes of wit? Are these original appointments, or superinduced and illegitimate qualities? Is not laughter as natural as tears? Tell me, morose man, tell me, ascetic, what is the significance of a child's laugh? Is it not spontaneous, that clear, pealing delight, gushing up from valves of joy that God has opened, and expressive of His own Beneficence? Is it not natural as the carol of birds; as the leap of the fountain that tosses its jets into diamonds? Ah! time tempers that laughter. Heavy burdens of care, and a moral consciousness, often make it alien to the heart. We get into the shadow of so many dear graves; we find so many occasions for repentant sorrow; or it may be so many strangling passions spring up within us, or such a shriveling sordidness takes possession of us; that in after years it is less frequent, and is broken. There is reckless laughter, too; there is heartless laughter; but when one can give, and does give, a clear, honest laugh, or in any way shows forth a genial sympathy, there is still left something of the innocence of nature and the

pulse of goodness. It is true, there are those, the intensity of whose inner life, and the circumstances of whose lot, may repress tumultuous joy; yet there is an attractiveness in them, as though that which in others breaks out in laughter, were distilled into spiritual serenity, and comes forth now and then in the sun-burst of a smile. Temperament has much to do with all this. But, still, I distrust a sour goodness, a mechanical elongation of the face; and in that which is natural find scope for playfulness, and a sphere of amusement.

Moreover, in the multitude of created things, there are many whose *office* it seems to be to stir us with joy, and fill us with cheerfulness, and mix the rugged realities of life with exquisite delight. Sights and sounds there are that cannot be turned into the channel of drudgery, and that elude the grasp of science. When philosophy has finished its deductions, and utilitarian ingenuity exhausted itself, there is still an overplus of something that touches the spring of pleasure—still hovers around us that indescribable beauty which is

"A joy for ever."

And is all this without intention in the Divine Scheme? or does it show that there is a lawful sphere of pleasure, and that whatever in nature, or in human agency, ministers to this in due pro-

portion, has its season in the economy of human life?

But the lawfulness of amusement rests firmly enough upon the single fact that it is *needful*. Our nature is an instrument of many chords. To keep it in order we must play upon all its strings. Not only so, we must change its activities. Relaxation must counterbalance tension. The care-worn brain must find refreshment in a harmless exhilaration of spirits, and the strained intellect be released from its task while the body is set to vigorous exercise. Not even the higher sentiments can be kept exclusively at work, without paralyzing the springs of their own vitality.

There are other benefits, too, growing out of amusement of a proper kind and degree, upon which I will not enlarge—social benefits, meliorating the solitary and intense selfishness which is so apt to spring up in the life of toil and of trade.

Now the majority of religious people, probably, will agree with what I have said in the abstract, and yet look doubtfully upon almost any specific amusement, as though it were a compromise with sin, and essentially antagonistic to the great ends of our being. This should not be so. Let the lawful Circle of Amusement be acknowledged. Let us protest against any ascetic denunciation of it; any confounding it with frivolity or vice. Let it

be elevated into the sacredness of an ordinance established in the conditions of our nature, and, as such, to be heeded by the laborer in his toil, the merchant in his close counting-room, and the student in his closet. And let not the Pulpit keep back its word of encouragement, from a false expediency, or a fear of the other extreme.

And, after all, I do not think that there is too much relaxation among us. Too much of certain kinds there may be; but of others not enough. The prevalent sound in the great city is not that of joy or merriment, but of grinding labor, of persistent toil, often in its motives and in its ends as injurious to the intellect and as wasting for the heart, as the merest routine of frivolity. Let the aching sinews relax. Let the dull eye be kindled with the inspiration of a lawful delight. Let the tired brain be amused, for often when it is inert, a power steals into it to brace it for new exertion, and for higher achievement. "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven." Within the Scheme of Life, guarded and restrained by its sanctities, there is a Circle of Amusement.

But, it will be asked, What kinds and what degrees of amusement are lawful? Instead of endeavoring to answer this question by specifications, by naming this or that as good or bad, I prefer to

set forth a few general principles, which may direct us in the considerations of use and abuse—of right and wrong. Indeed, there is but little efficacy in a mere code of negations; that teasing scrupulousness, which does not at all kill the heart of evil desire, but keeps one calculating how little good he may do, and how much inclination he may gratify. Far better the inspiration of positive principle, which carries him by its own instinct away from the wrong and into the right.

I would say, then, in the first place, in regard to any form of relaxation or enjoyment, we may know whether it is lawful or not—whether it fulfils the proper ends of amusement or not—by ascertaining whether it refreshes or exhausts our energies; whether our entire nature is strengthened by it, or made weaker, especially in its higher powers; whether, after our indulgence, we are better fitted for the severer duties of life, or enter upon them with reluctance and languor, and a morbid craving for a continuance of the indulgence. In short, we may readily ascertain whether its tendency is to maintain the balance of our nature or to derange it, and to vitiate us physically and morally.

That is a vicious mode of indulgence, for instance, which injures bodily health; which violates those physical laws, the sacredness of which I referred to in the last discourse It is vicious, whe-

ther the injury is involved in the kind of indulgence, or in the degree. That method of amusement which involves exposure to heated and overcrowded rooms and damp night-air, to shattered nerves or excited passions, for these very reasons, is wrong; and we need go no further for a list of scruples.

That kind of amusement, again, furnishes a sufficient standard of condemnation in itself, which lowers our tastes, and brutalizes our feelings. A good many in this city entertain strange ideas of amusement. For, judging by their practice, it consists in an utter abandonment of all manliness and decency. They not only unbend the bow, but burn it up. Young men, whose sole conception of enjoyment is concentrated in the word "*Fast*"—who grow fast, live fast, go fast on the track of destruction, with their own folly for a locomotive, and champagne and brandy for the steam-power; converting themselves into liquor-casks, propping up door-posts, hanging over railings, and startling the dull ear of night with rickety melody and drunken war-whoops. There are others, half fop and half ruffian, who divide their time between the favorite racer and the pet pugilist, and whose idea of the millennium, probably, would be that of a protracted Fourth of July. And, yet again, those who seem to identify amuse-

ment with the least possible exertion of thought, and to value it in proportion as it is void of anything that can for a moment tax their reasoning faculties, or challenge their wit.

Now, different conditions of life, different men, require different amusements. I would not prescribe one method for all. Nor do I believe that recreation should be a dull, strenuous pursuit. It should be an unbending from tight conventionalities. It should be hearty, genial, sometimes merely receptive; for often thus, as I have already said, unconscious vigor is poured into the mind, such as comes to us in a quiet, passive drinking-in of nature. But there is no lawful element of amusement in brutality, or beastliness, or empty folly.

We may be sure, too, that any amusement is wrong in kind, or in degree, which interrupts our proper relations, or intrudes upon higher spheres. How many are there who can find no employment for an evening, except in some entertainment, or public excitement. "Where shall we go?" is their question. They never think that possibly they might stay at home. That there are, or *should* be, among these domestic sanctities, springs of delight, pleasanter than any that flow beyond those walls. He is a miserable being, who has no resources of enjoyment within himself, but depends entirely

upon foreign suggestion; who, in fact, must run away from himself, and pitch into the waves of superficial excitement, a perpetual whirl and glitter that drowns all personality, and sweeps away soul and sense. So, too, is that a miserable way of living, which destroys the personality of the *Home;* which finds there no indigenous pleasures, but makes us think we must call into it a perpetual rout and confusion, or turn home out of doors. That is a miserable style of living which accepts none of the responsibilities of home; does not recognize its significance, but makes it a mere den to eat and sleep in, and for the rest leaves it empty and cheerless. My friends, in this method of living, there are interests involved, deep as the roots of national character, vital as the springs of a people's life. Neglect the claims of home for the solicitations of amusement; let all the ideals of life be comprehended in what is termed "Society;" and there strikes a rot into the holiest relations. Reverential ties are loosened, and the sanctities of domestic honor valued lightly. And then the roots of national stability are torn up. Institutions are fashions that change with the months, and the people, and the people's history, become a game of foot-ball. But happy is the land whose granite heart is warmed by sacred hearth-fires, and in whose homes are nourished venerable associations

and local attachments. These intense sympathies are not less but more favorable to broader claims. These enrich the blood, and toughen the fibres of a noble patriotism. These impart that vitality which withstands oppression, and clings to the right. These send some element of purity and honor into a nation's life, lend it that identity of soul which stirs to this common suggestion of the altar and the home; and, hemming it around with the father's ashes, and the children's hopes, make it a land worth living and worth dying for.

Indeed, where the life of the home is neglected, there is no true manliness. Fathers! whose sons are growing up miserable shoots of dissipation, what nourishment have their best faculties received at home? Mothers! whose daughters are happy only in the whirl of vanity and extravagance, what has been their example? Members of fashionable society! there is not only excess, but inexpressible evil, in any method of amusement that breaks up domestic quietude, and leaves no time for domestic responsibilities, and no delight in domestic pleasure.

And this point upon which I have dwelt, may stand as an illustration of the wrong of any amusement which unfits us for serious occupation, which intrudes upon the time claimed by other and higher

things, and which renders effort, thought, or religion distasteful to us.

Let me observe, again, that there are some amusements which are injurious through their associations, yet which, in themselves, may not be intrinsically wrong. It is doubtful, to be sure, whether these associations have not become so inherent in the system as to render it incurable, and make all endeavors to extricate it useless. And yet, I am inclined to believe that such an extrication *is* possible, and in some instances, to a good degree, has been effected. It depends much upon the people whether it shall be more generally so, or not. But of one thing I am certain, that where incentives to drunkenness and opportunities for licentiousness, are kept as parts of the machinery of any amusement, no pure and good mind should patronize it. I said I would not specify; and yet, that I may be distinctly understood, I will say that I do not share to its full extent, the feeling of so many of the wise and virtuous against the drama. I believe it may be, and in some instances is, extricated from its worst associations. I believe if Shakespeare can be read in an unobjectionable way, it is possible to represent him in an unobjectionable way. But I have but little sympathy with it as it is generally brought before the public. I have nothing but denunciation for it, so long as its

doors open into the dram-shop and the brothel. I have no respect for the wit that sharpens itself with impure suggestion, or the genius that vents its energy in profaneness. Indeed, in all this, there is little that marks real genius or wit—there is not only immorality, but an evident poverty of invention. And they are most to blame who encourage these accessories; who will sit with their wives and their daughters, and hear that which they would shut out of their parlors, or kick into the street.

Let me say, again, that any amusement is intrinsically either right or wrong; though, as I have already remarked, different modes of recreation may be needed by different persons. But, so far as the moral quality of a thing is concerned, if wrong for one it is not right for another. For instance, I doubt the validity of any amusement that is thought proper for the people but improper for the minister. I know that the clergyman should weigh well the *tendencies* of his example, and, if at all, err on the side opposite a dangerous extreme. Let any one ask himself, "What is there in this amusement which makes it right for me, but wrong for the minister? What is there in it which lets me enjoy it coolly, but wonder so much at him? Is it a latent conviction in my mind that it is essentially wrong, or only a professional incongruity on his part? If a professional incongruity, why?"

This may lead to two discoveries. In the first place, we may find that we entertain a wrong conception of the ministerial office, and of the relations of the clergyman as a man. Some appear to regard the minister himself as a sort of institution, of which the color of the coat, the tie of the neck-cloth, and the cast of the features are essential parts. Indeed, it is not certain that a dyspeptic hue is not one of the requisite symbols. At least, it is, I fear, too much the case that the man is absorbed in the office, and the office regarded in a mechanical and conventional way. The true minister, as I conceive, is a true man, with the head and heart of a man, who is fitted for his work, not by his unnaturalness, but by his universal sympathies and vital experience, and who is none the less acceptable in my sorrows because he has been a participant in my lawful joys; who does not come to me mechanically, but with the hand and the voice of a tried friend. I believe that a minister's power with the people, so far as the efficacy of the truth depends upon any organ, is in proportion to his manliness, which should be pure from taint, but at the same time a complete manliness. If any kind of amusement, then, is lawful, there is nothing in his office that should prevent his due participation in it. And if he deems it lawful, let him not skulk about it, but join in it openly. But, on the other hand,

if it is wrong, let him not only avoid it, and lift up his voice unsparingly against it, but let those who wonder at his presence, ask if their sense of the incongruity is not a rebuke of themselves as well of him. I have said nothing here to lighten the conscientious scruples of the minister—let him be solicitous and watchful. But, I repeat, any amusement is intrinsically right or wrong, and not merely the clergyman, but everybody else, is bound to learn and to act upon the distinction.

I observe, finally, that while there is a lawful Circle of Amusement, it is not a circle enclosing all other claims, but included within others. A fearful mistake is made by those who live as though the former were the true idea; who make pleasure the horizon and the ultimate term of life; who live only in the external and the sensual; who treat trivial things as though they were paramount, and supreme interests as subordinate; who, in fact, recognize no great end in life at all; who detect none of its solemn meanings; who pass among its significant lights and shadows in the heedlessness and flutter of a perpetual holiday. A mere life of pleasure—need I describe the incongruity, the moral hideousness, the guilt of that which so palpably violates the ordinance that gives a season and a time for every thing under the sun? Nay, consider the disgust, the dissatisfaction and horror which it

brings into the experience of those who thus waste and desecrate the privileges of existence. A life of mere Pleasure! A little while, in the spring-time of the senses, in the sunshine of prosperity, in the jubilee of health, it may seem well enough. But how insufficient, how mean, how terrible when age comes, and sorrow, and death. A life of pleasure! What does it look like, when these great changes beat against it—when the realities of eternity stream in? It looks like the fragments of a feast, when the sun shines upon the withered garlands, and the tinsel, and the overturned tables, and the dead lees of wine. And are any of you thus living, absorbed with painted deceits and the evanescent sparkle of indulgence? Are these the chief delights of hundreds and thousands in this very city? And yet around them all is life, with its relations, life with its mysteries, life with its privileges, life rushing into eternity; while, from its sorrows as well as its joys; from its neglected opportunities, from its deep heart, and from its graves, there comes the declaration,—"To every thing"—not to mere amusement, O! pleasure-seeker; not to mere indulgence, O! immortal spirit clothed in mortal conditions—"to *every thing* there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven."

THE THREE VICES.

V.

THE THREE VICES.

"They have stricken me, shalt thou say, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."

PROVERBS XXIII. 35.

No survey of the Moral Aspects of City Life, however general, will permit us to overlook those grosser forms of evil by which so many of its thousands are tempted and overcome. These, in fact, largely contribute to that *moral* significance of the metropolis, of which I spoke in the first Discourse. The array of buildings, the luxury and splendor, the countless wheels of traffic, are little compared to the spiritual issues that work within; the flashes and the shadows that come out from the defeat or the victory of human souls. Perhaps you regard only the *material* city, with its tiara of wealth and its sceptre of commerce. But think of what goes on in its heart, deep as the heart of man! Think, among all these roofs, what a theatre of grandeur a single garret may be; its walls burst-

ing away into an immensity broad as the moral relations of our nature; its transactions vital as the sum and essence of life; its spectators those who, from higher seats, sympathize with earth, and rejoice when one sinner repents. Amidst the pomp and brilliance of gay saloons, think what darkness, and blasting, and inner lightnings! Think, notwithstanding the firm streets, and the stability of the houses, on what surges men are afloat, tossed to and fro, and drifting in tempest and in wreck: to use the graphic language of the context, feeling like those "that lie down in the midst of the sea, or as he that lieth upon the top of a mast," crying out, "they have stricken me, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not: when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."

Especially, then, we cannot pass by the regions of vice, if we would dwell upon the moral lessons of the city, any more than we can fail to see, with our outward eyes, its symbols and opportunities all around us. And, as we pause for this purpose, we perceive that, out of the general ground of vice, there rise three *vices* more prominent than the rest, and which peculiarly force themselves upon our attention. Let us, for a few moments, study their character and their features.

The first, whether we regard its extension through space and numbers, or its vast circle of

consequences, may be truly termed *colossal.* Its shame falls upon almost every hearth, and its influence poisons all the arteries of public good. There is hardly a quarrel or a crime that cannot be traced to it, and it has, perhaps, the lion's share in the entire stock of human misery. Like other vices, it is insidious—its whole method is delusive and dangerous. Admit its premiss, and you are in the whirl of its fatal conclusions. It has various disguises, yet under all its power is sure and deadly. It employs the charter of custom, and the solicitations of friendship; it calls itself "Good-fellowship," and "Anti-fanaticism." But it is no respecter of classes. In parlors and hovels, in rags and broad-cloth, its dupes stumble and die. It strikes manly strength and beauty with untimely rottenness; genius is drowned by it; the brain-links of logic are broken, and the tongue of eloquence utters a tuneless babble. Indeed, it has the art to cheat men out of their very personality, and to change them into maniacs and fools. No sanction of the moral nature or of the affections is too strong for it; it kills self-respect, and breeds monstrous issues in the wells of natural love. And yet this vice, that has all the diseases and the woes in its employment; that is so brutal and disgusting in its specific forms; when we consider the scale of its ravages, dilates into the horribly sub-

lime. No pestilence has wrought with more terrible fatality ; no conqueror has shed so much blood. Gather together the bones buried at the foot of the pyramids, and the mangled forms crushed by the heel of battle at Waterloo—from all earth's fields of war call up the dead—and there will answer to the summons no such army as the host of victims *this* might summon from the church-yards of the land. In the city, of course, as the centre of so much passion and appetite, it has a dreadful sway. And, whether it hangs out its signals flaring to the street, or tinkles in crystal goblets in the halls of fashion, it is known—at least, wives, mothers, desolate children know it—as the vice that puts the cup to the lip, and steals away all that is dearest in the life.

The second vice to which I refer, is not so widely spread as Intemperance, but its fruits are hardly less terrible. Gaming appeals not merely to the passion of avarice, but to that love of hazard, that fascination of chance, which has such a mysterious influence over men. Perhaps the professional gamester, unscrupulous in his methods and certain of his end, is animated chiefly by the spirit of gain. And, in all the ranks of rascality, I know of none more odious, except those who, like him, practice vice with a hard heart, and a cool head. In other men, the indulgence of vice

blends with the play of the emotional nature; passion swamps the brain. But this man trains himself to restrain passion, with all the solicitude of a stoic. He will not drink enough to flush his blood or obscure his mind, lest his ingenious process of villany should be balked by some error ot calculation, or some jar of sympathy. And there he sits with his spider eyes, and deliberately plucks his victim—plucks his money, his honor, his very heart-strings. But in the case of many, I repeat, a spirit of desperate enterprise blends with the desire for gain. They are fascinated by the excitement and the hope that quiver on "the hazard of the die." I may observe, by the way, that it is a spirit not confined to the gaming-house, and does not always operate with cards and dotted bones. How much of it throbs in the arteries of trade, and is dignified by the name of "*Speculation!*" But in the gaming-house, it is involved with certain guilt, and with results more or less horrible. Besides, there is not only the magic of luck to tempt a man, but the hope of retrieval, the fury of loss, and the stake that is backed by despair. I need not say, in trite words—a dreadful vice, a vice fearfully prevalent in the great city. Hark to the click of cards, the rumbling balls, the rattling dice! That is the artillery of hazard; those are the sounds that carry anguish

into a thousand tearful, shuddering hearts. Those are the implements with which men try to shirk God's ordinance of labor, and lay a spell on fortune. Click and rumble! there they strike!—the maddest passions of the human heart. There they go! reputation, happiness, and love; the employer's money, the friend's claim, the wife's dear relic; all the sanctities of the man thrown down and lost. What preaching do we require against this vice, more powerful than that which the interior scenery—the breasts and souls of those present in the gaming-room—might furnish? Terrible is the evil that goes on thus, night after night, in the city. Show forth, O! interests that are sacrificed there, and tarnish the golden piles with tears and blood. Roll out, clouds of pent up agony and despair, and dim the glittering chandeliers. Blossom, O! walls, with the tapestry of remorse, the ruin and the crime, that are linked so fatally with the gambler's vice.

The last vice to which I refer, I suppose must be limited to general terms, and meagerly described, lest its very illustrations should become its allies. None, however, strikes a deeper blow at the sanctities of life. It involves man's degradation and woman's shame. It reaches wide and far under the respectabilities of society, and is concealed by many a whited sepulchre. It brands disgrace upon

one sex, but with the other carries a bold front into high places and pure air. It is a sewer of uncleanness that under-flows society, and sends a taint through the public morals. It is the temptation to a thousand wrongs, and the fruitful spring of crime. It is the leprosy that cleaves to great cities. It is the abomination that has walked the streets of Corinth, and Rome, and Pompeii, as it now walks the streets of Paris, and London, and New York ; always an agent of social dissolution —an indication of national decay—in proportion as it is restrained, or shameless. It carries with itself the curse of perverted affections and violated law—the curse that saps the intellect, and brutalizes the heart, and burns to the bone. How can we describe it more concisely, with more awful impressiveness, than it is described in this very book of Proverbs, embodied as "the strange woman . . . which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God." "Her house," adds the wise man, "Her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead. None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life."

Such, then, are the three vices which are more prominent than all the rest in the midst of the great metropolis. It may appear needless to have mentioned them, and useless to speak against

them; such a deep seat have they in the corruption of the human heart. But, as I said in the commencement, no moral survey of city life would permit us to pass them by, and their rootedness and prevalence only makes it the more necessary that we *should* speak against them. And, in conducting this appeal, I know of no better arguments against vice in general, and these three vices in particular, than those which may be drawn from the language of the text itself.

Taking up the suggestions which this affords, I observe, then, in the first place, that the votaries of any vice do not realize the injury which it inflicts. Much of that injury they may be conscious of, but not of its depth or full extent. This is illustrated by the fact that what they would shrink from with horror in the commencement of their career, becomes in a little while the easy and unconscious movement of a habit. Set before any young man, just starting in life, the lowest stages of drunkenness. Show him into what a physical deformity, a tenement of disease, the votary of intemperance has converted the goodly fabric of his body. Show him the intellectual wreck; the dislocation and paralysis of the affections. And do you think that the drunkard himself realizes this--*habitually* realizes it, I mean—with the force with which it strikes the other? No, the flame of

appetite has seared the nerves of sensitiveness, and his spiritual acuteness has been blunted in proportion to the depth of his descent. The two emotions left to him are the impulse and the gratification, without a moral check between. The habit that degrades him, that brutalizes him, that makes him much lower than the brute, has become as spontaneous as his pulsation or his breath. And that marvelous humanity which was once a child, shielded from all roughness in the solicitude of a mother's love, and that blossomed into strength and hope, like you, young man; which felt gladly the blessing of existence, and felt proudly its claims in life; see now, how it is kicked about, and battered, and spit upon—the dilapidated shrine of a soul that has burnt too low in its socket to reveal to itself its own debasement. "Aha!" says he, "they have stricken me, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not." Indeed, it seems to me that this is the most awful consequence of any vice—to live in it spontaneously, without any higher ideal, without any moral sensibility; to become level with it, and closed up in it; the entire humanity contracted, the arteries dried up, the spiritual nerves benumbed, the nature discrowned and narrowed to one intense desire, one passionate gratification; so that others see it, and mark the meanness and the loss,

but the victim himself perceives it not. We think too hardly, my friends, of positive pain. There is hope in that; there is mercy in that; but in loss, privation, deadness of faculty, *there's* retribution. *There's* retribution; not in what is suffered *by* the man, but in what is wasted *of* the man. And the slave of vice comes to just this—he *wastes* away. Young man! put by the implements of hazard; there is a deadly magic in them to dry up the sweetness of nature, and to narrow the heart into a hell. Turn from the way that goes "down to the chambers of death." Not only because sensuality stamps its ghastliness upon the face, and plants its torment in the bones; but because of the welcomed degradation, the unconscious shame. Dash down the glass. Why suffer your faculties, your very nature, to be consumed in its depths? In the light of an honest pride, of a manly dignity, consider the essential meanness of all vice. Not only has it gained complete mastery over your moral sense, drowned your truest convictions, and perverted your best feelings; but see what a picture of humanity you present—snoring in the bar-room, reeking in the gutter, grinning like an idiot, whooping like a savage, tumbled about like a foot-ball, the lines of intelligence chiseled from your face or daubed with blood and bruises, your lips black with blasphemy, your brow fanned by licen-

tious passion, your heart dry, your brain hot, your memory shattered, a bankrupt in your limbs, a caricature of a man! This is sometimes called "Pleasure"—but it *is* Vice; a spell so potent that, while it strikes body and soul with grievous wounds, they are not realized, and its victims are often unconscious of, or even rejoice in their degradation, crying out, as it were—"They have stricken me, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not."

But there is another characteristic of vice which may seem to, but does not, contradict this. I have been speaking of the unconscious degradation into which the drunkard, or gamester, or libertine, declines; but I remark now, that there *are* also streams of consciousness which break in upon this guilty routine. There are seasons when a vague sense of misery and loss steals into the soul, like the sense of a dream, and the wretched victim cries out,—"When shall I awake?" For, although the best faculties of our nature may be drugged into an habitual lethargy, no man can utterly rid himself of his manhood. It *will* startle him sometimes, with a feeling of incongruity, a fitful, nightmare consciousness. The paralyzed nerves will, for a moment, thrill again; for a moment, into the darkness that enwraps his spirit, the clear blue heaven, and all the sanctities of life, will flow. Indeed, is not this a very common experience with those who

are far gone in vice? Fain would I think it is so, for there is hopefulness in the fact. Fain would I believe that, like one who, standing under a canopy of cloud and of shower, sees afar off the fields where the sunshine is glancing upon the green leaves and the corn, the prodigal, sometimes, through a lift in his moral darkness, catches a glimpse of the far-off past; apprehends the contrast between his own condition and a true and healthy life; and feels that he is living in an awful dream. It may all be forgotten, and the next moment he may spontaneously yield to the sweep of passion. But, whatever the result, I apprehend that there is no testimony against vice so forcible and so terrible, as that which now and then bursts from the lips of its very victims—with a sense of the spell which they have woven around their own souls, a sense of its incongruity and essential misery, and a sense of their impotence, crying out,—"When, O! when shall we awake?"

And yet, yielding to the current of habit, and quickly lapsing, the slave of vice exclaims—"I will seek it yet again!" For, of all the rest, this is the most fearful characteristic of vice—its irresistible *fascination;* the ease with which it sweeps away resolution, and wins a man to forget his momentary out-look, his throb of penitence, in the embrace of indulgence. "I will seek it yet

again." Dreadful charm! that opens the gates of temptation, and closes the door of hope! There has been, perhaps, a season of recovery; of fresh determination, and solemn vows. The soul has begun to feel the gush of health, and life to put on its natural look. The faces of friends are brightening up, and hearts that were wrung with anguish beat with hope. When, all at once, the old temptation passes by, looks upon him with the sweet, insidious fascination, and the sinews of his purpose shrink before it; his nature is all weakness once more, and, sadly and faintly, like one who is descending an abyss, his words come back upon the ear,—"I will seek it yet again!" This, I say, is the most fearful characteristic of vice. You can never tell when it has lost its hold of you. When you think that all is clear, some subtle cord may remain to trip you, and drag you down. Ask the reformed libertine, when he can be certain that the sparks of evil passion are quenched; ask him who has renounced cards and dice, what would be the result of a single game; ask the man who with tears and prayers has set his name to the pledge, for what he would risk a single taste—even the smell of the flask; and their answer will testify to the potency of vice over those who have once felt its sway. And this is enough to enforce the precept—do not tamper with it in any shape, to any

degree. No man who has entered upon its indulgence ever *meant* to be its slave. He would only seek "a little pleasure"—some "relaxation natural to the exuberance of youth and health." But let the fate of the Gamester, Libertine, and Sot, warn you against its very beginning. Repel the first solicitation, as though it threw open for you the ghastly chambers of death. Refuse the first game, as though upon the tempting heap before you, you saw spots of suicidal blood. Set down the first glass, as though its ruddy circles spread out into that great maelstrom which carries down the wreck of thousands. The first step; O! avoid it; for thus began the wretched infatuation of multitudes who, on this very Sabbath, in this very city, in bar-rooms and haunts of shame, have said—"I will seek it yet again! I will seek it yet again!"

My friends, I might go on and delineate the physical woes; the injuries one by one inflicted on the intellect, and the heart, and the moral sense, by these Three Vices. But in all I could not comprehend more than is involved in these words before us—words which describe the spiritual wasting and paralysis; the fitful, startling consciousness; the dreadful infatuation of their votaries. Upon the grave of some such votary, how often might be written an inscription like this:—"Here lies one who was kindly nurtured, and well taught,

but who grew up to spurn the dearest relations, and plunged into the world to enjoy life. In the great city he gratified every appetite, and tried every form of Vice. At length began to appear the inevitable results. The stamp of dissipation was set upon his face, and his hold on respectability was shaken. He neglected business. He descended, step by step, from the man of high life to the kennel-sot. He was tormented by the worst forms of disease. He died by inches. At times, to make his condition more awful by the contrast, glimpses of better days broke in upon him—the face of his father, the sad look of his mother, or of his neglected wife, whom he hurried to the grave. But he was in the setting of a dreadful current, and he went on. And so, quickly, the end came. He raved at it, he struggled with it, he clenched his hands and tried to pray. No one cared for him. And so he died; while from the drinking-house hard by, peals of laughter broke over his cold remains, from those who had shared his prosperity, joined him in his revelry, and forgotten that he had ever lived."

Or, perhaps, as an appropriate epitaph, it might be said of him, that he was one of those who, having surrendered his own life to sensuality, and run through the entire circle of profligacy, was not merely a victim of vice, but a seducer of others;

one who most vividly embodies our conception of a fiend; not a nature cast down in spiritual impotence, and groping in the chaos of its faculties, but one who tempts men to sin, and delights in the work. He was a gamester, with a cool brain, and an eye like a hawk; paring away the scruples of the uninitiated, feeding with cunning suggestion the flame of hope, and laughing at the hell of rage and terror into which it finally turned. He was a libertine, relieving the tedium of satiety by contaminating the purity and pandering to the passions of another. He was a strong-headed wine-bibber, and he put the cup to another's lips to make him a toy for his amusement, and the butt of his jokes, and then sent him home to his friends a madman or a fool. He was that meanest of all God's creatures whom we are compelled to call human—that thing bloated with sin, bankrupt in principle, an excrescence on society, rotten himself and rotting others—"A Man About Town."

But, I say, whatever delineation we might give of the course and the consequences of vice, these words contain the awful significance of the whole —"They have stricken me, and I was not sick; they have beaten me, and I felt it not; when shall I awake? I will seek it yet again."

I will say briefly, in closing, what, did time permit, I should urge more at length. I have select-

ed Intemperance, Gaming, Licentiousness, as the special topics of this discourse, not only because they are the most prominent representatives of Vice in general, but because they are peculiarly capable of being removed by public action. Their power may be broken, and their influence narrowed, by *Law;* and it becomes every citizen to act upon his responsibility to this effect. I am aware that legal penalties cannot kill appetite, or quench inward dispositions. But if this is an objection to a penal statute in one instance, it is an objection in all instances. The law against murder cannot prevent the murderous disposition—the penalty for stealing does not make one any less a thief at heart. Law is not a moral and regenerating force; it is restrictive, and has reference to overt acts. And if, in this capacity, it is legitimate and efficacious anywhere, it is so when it confiscates the implements of the Gamester, or stops the traffic of the dealer in intoxicating drinks. I repeat, therefore, that it becomes every citizen to exert all his influence in erecting legal safeguards against these monstrous vices. It is a shameful inconsistency, that the law should busy itself only with consequences, and neglect and even foster causes. It leaves uncared for the hot-beds of iniquity, and shuts up the vagrant and the thief. With one hand it licenses a dram-shop, and with the other

builds a gallows. Hearer, where are your influence and your vote in this matter?

Again, Public *Sentiment* is a powerful agent in regard to vice. How many of us are implicated, unconsciously it may be, with these very immoralities which all so unhesitatingly condemn? How widely-spread in community, under different names, is the *principle* of gaming. How many of us tacitly overlook that licentiousness in one sex, for which public opinion blasts the other. How much are thousands who consider themselves sober and temperate people, to blame for drunkenness—sanctioning the use which leads to such fearful abuse, and throwing the veil of their respectability over its tendencies and its horrors. Prevalent vices, after all, do not grow directly out of the hearts of the absolutely vicious. They have secret and far-reaching roots in customs and opinions maintained unconsciously, or deemed to be innocent, and every one should ask himself—how much do I contribute to that corrupt sentiment in the body-politic at large, of which these gross vices are only the ulcerous indications?

But, at least, in regard to this matter of Vice, let each see to himself that he is pure and free. And, with this admonition to all, I turn especially to the young men in this great metropolis; for to these Three Vices in particular are they exposed.

And to them I say, beware of a false notion of independence and manliness; beware of that misconception of these qualities which exhibits itself in swaggering and roughness; in the quantity which you can drink, and the ingenuity with which you can blaspheme. Be not so solicitous to rebut all suspicion of "greenness" as to come out in vice full blossom. Better live green and die green, than to be thus rotten before your prime. And do not give up the feeling of regard for parents—of veneration and obedience. Depend upon it, though the world may not all be justly styled a glittering masquerade, you will only too soon learn the emptiness of many of its professions, the fair-weather deceit of its promises, and the frail tenure of its friendships. But the flame in those old bosoms, that kindled over your cradle, and glowed through long hours of watching, still burns on with an ardor that no change can abate, and that death's cold river can hardly quench. And if this parental love is thus strong in its nature, when cherished and responded to it is mighty in its influence over us amidst the thick temptations of life.

And I tell you nothing new, but something that is profoundly and solemnly true, when I urge you to seek the control and the guidance of Religious Principle. This alone can give you firmness amidst the solicitations of passion and of appetite.

By this comes the resolution that is born of earnest prayer. This furnishes the inspired wisdom that refutes the sophistries of vice. This reveals those spiritual realities which enable us by contrast to detect the hollowness of splendid guilt, the folly of mis-spent time, and the degradation and the misery that are mixed with indulgence.

Young man! have you known something of the way of Vice? Now, in this quiet Sabbath-hour, renounce it, turn from it, forever! Let your decision be for the good and the upward course. Go not forward on that fatal path. Say not, O! say not—"I will seek it yet again!"

THE THREE SOCIAL FORCES.

VI.

THE THREE SOCIAL FORCES.

—For his word was with power.

LUKE IV. 32.

THE doctrine of Jesus, which went down to the roots of man's spiritual nature, and moved its deepest springs, was so different from the dry, hard formalities of their customary teachers, that the people were astonished at it. It was more than instruction—it was a moral impulse and awakening. Not only did they perceive its truth —they *felt* it. "For his word was with power."

But, while this was the quality of all the Saviour's teachings, it is not improper to say that every noble sentiment, every truth spoken in love, in some degree partakes of it. It is the highest function of any great utterance, not to impart instruction merely, but *inspiration;* not to direct men over the same dead level of facts, but to enlarge their nature, and to lift them up. Nay, even a false and vile utterance, when it takes hold of the *sentiments* of men, becomes a power—a

mischievous force—whose influence is incalculable. The mis-statements with which it deceives the intellect may be easily refuted, but it is difficult to drive out the impression with which it has inoculated the entire system.

In one word, truths, opinions, ideas, spoken or written, are not merely facts, or entities, they are *forces;* and it is easy to discover their supremacy over all the energies of the material world. Every invention, every utensil or vehicle, like the locomotive or the telegraph, *assists* society—is a means by which it is developed; but the developing power itself is the *intelligence* which runs to and fro with the rail-car, is the *sentiment* which leaps along the wires. Everything grows from the centre outward; and so humanity grows from moral and intellectual inspirations. The globe on which we live unfolds its successive epochs through flood and fire, and gravitation carries it majestically onward towards the constellation Hercules. But the history of our race—the great drama for which the physical world affords a theatre—is developed by more subtile forces. Whatever touches the nerves of motive, whatever shifts man's moral position, is mightier than steam, or caloric, or lightning. It projects us into another sphere; it throws us upon a higher or lower plane of activity. Thus, a martyr's blood may become not only "the seed

of the Church," but of far-reaching revolutions; and the philosopher's abstraction beats down feudal castles, and melts barriers of steel. One great principle will tell more upon the life of a people, than all its discoveries and conquests. Its character in history will be decided, not by its geographical conformation, but by its ideas. In the great sum of social destiny, England is not that empire whose right arm encircles the northern lakes, and whose left stretches far down into the Indian Sea; but an *influence* which is vascular with the genius of Bacon and Locke, and Shakespeare and Milton. And our own America, reaching from ocean to ocean, and crowned with its thirty stars, is not a mere territory on the map, a material weight among nations, but a sentiment—we will trust and believe—a *sentiment* to go abroad to other people, and into other times, caught from apostles of liberty, and kindled by champions of human right.

As we look around then, upon the great city, which, more than any other place, represents the form and working of the age, let us remember that what is stirring in the world's heart, and changing the face of the times, is not really the influence of invention, or art; is not, primarily, the mighty commerce that clusters about its wharves, or the traffic that rolls through its streets; but that intelligence, that sentiment, those thoughts and opinions, whose

written or spoken word is power. And these social forces, more potent in the long run than machinery, or money, or even than custom, we find sufficiently well represented for my present purpose by the *Press*, the *Platform*, and the *Pulpit*. I do not speak exclusively or exactly, but very generally, when I select the Press as the organ of *Literature*, the Platform of *Science*, and the Pulpit of *Morality* and *Religion*. And, my friends, these—Literature, Science, Morality and Religion, are the great Forces of our age, and have a significance which we cannot overlook in surveying the Moral Aspects of City Life. Let us, then, endeavor to discover something of this significance.

No organ of intellectual and moral influence, in other words of Social Force, is in our day more prominent than the *Press*. For it is the great vehicle of Literature, whether its form be that of book or journal, whether the subject matter be esthetic or political. Sending its influence far beyond the reach of the human voice, and into the most private hours, it gathers to itself all the facilities of the age. Its productions, fast as steam can make and carry them, go abroad through all the land, silent as snow-flakes, but potent as thunder. Everybody who has anything to say rushes into print, besides a good many who have nothing to say. Few, in the present time, write for immortality, but

a good many for contemporary hearing. The old authors, who wrought their lives into a single book, worked for a lineal fame—an audience stretching downward through generations; but now, the Press is simply an additional tongue of steam and lightning, by which a man speaks his first thought, his instant argument or grievance, to millions in a day. His audience is broad, but the interest may be local and ephemeral. The good and the evil of this literary activity, are too apparent to require much discussion. Cheap publications bring the purest style and the best thoughts of the wise and the good, within the reach of all classes; but, by the same facility, bundles of folly and of moral pestilence come into our kitchens and chambers, like the frogs of Egypt. In all this, however, there is one fact worthy consideration. It is only *merit* of some kind that lives, and really goes abroad. Ten thousand works, much heavier than the brains from which they spring, drop by their own gravity, and are cast out and trodden under foot of men. But that which attracts and moves the people, is a literary power; sometimes, alas! an evil power—the power of genius burning into the heart its own intense and unholy passion, or fascinating the intellect with its splendid sophistries. And, surely, there can hardly be a keener retribution, than the consciousness of having writ-

ten a strong, bad book; a *power* that seizes upon the minds and characters of men, and heaves up their inner life with wicked suggestions, and peoples it with lascivious imagery; a book thrown out, perhaps, when the intellect was misty, and the blood hot, and repented of with tears in more sober days, but going down, from generation to generation, to inject its poison and to leave its scars. Doubtless such books do live and do their work; doubtless such instances there are of evil intellect and gifted sin. But, after all, my friends, are they not rare instances? Is it not true that those books at the present day, which pass eagerly from hand to hand, and move the popular heart, are, by a great majority, inspired with truth, and pregnant with the spirit of humanity? To say nothing of those volumes which communicate simple facts, or whose tone as well as purpose is religious and moral, consider what is the character of those works of *fiction* which are widely read and applauded. It is not misanthropy, it is not Werter-sentimentality or Rochefoucauld-skepticism, it is not unclean wit. It is the tale that throws a genial light upon our common humanity; that reveals the spirit of chivalry shining in weather-beaten faces and throbbing in humble hearts; that casts a halo of glory around childhood's innocence and faith, strikes out sparks of goodness from the nether

depths, brings up to our sympathies the ragged and the castaway, and shows God's blue sky of pitying tenderness bending over them all. A woman takes up her pen to delineate a great social wrong, and the story becomes as the lightning that shines from one end of the heaven to the other. It takes hold of the souls of people, as formal logic and sharp statistics never did. The press cannot send it out fast enough. From hand to hand, from land to land, it leaps like sparks of electricity. Translators seize upon it, dramatists mold it, poets catch themes from it, bards sing it. It is in vain to send out other books to catch and stop it. They do not ride by its side, but are sucked down in its wake. It is as useless to hurl counter-arguments, as to attempt to batter down the Atlantic when a storm has got hold of it. Such a storm-gale is the popular feeling and conviction that responds to this book.

And so, my friends, I think we shall find that when a work of literature becomes really a living element—a social force—it is commonly not only a work of merit, but a work of essential truth and humanity. But, in considering the moral significance of the Press, at the present day, with especial interest must we regard that most diffused and wonderful of all its products—the *daily newspaper*. I say wonderful, for I know of nothing

more so. It is an embodiment of the time, not only because it contains the passing intelligence, but because the most marvellous inventions and stupendous energies of the time have produced it. It lies damp upon your breakfast-table—open it, and you have the world as it looks now, daguerreotyped. The speech you heard last evening is substantially there; has been read by this time in Connecticut, and is flying towards Iowa. The electric-wire has enabled it to tell you some transaction only a few hours old in New Orleans. The steamship, whose lanterns as you slept came streaming through the midnight, has brought Europe to your chair. And what though great evil is blended with this wonderful agency? What though the editor's leader is unsound, or tainted with personalities? What though here is a scurrilous attack, and there a lying puff? Here, on the other hand, are all the facts of the time, and the antagonistic opinions of men, spread out with a generous catholicity. What though in one column lurks a foul advertisement?—in another the moral sentiment of the time rebukes it. What though quackery promises to cure Pandora's box of evils with a box of pills? a little further you may read the conclusions of true science. In short, my friends, I maintain here that the good overbalances by far the evil, and out of this very generality of

the newspapers we get the results which Milton predicted. "Though all the winds of doctrine," says he, "were let loose to play upon the earth, so Truth be in the field, we do injuriously, by licensing and prohibiting to misdoubt her strength. Let her and Falsehood grapple; who ever knew Truth put to the worse, in a free and open encounter? Her confuting is the best and surest suppressing." In all these blended aspects of the daily journal, we detect the ultimate benefit, and the moral significance of freedom. It is itself a cause and a consequence of freedom. Whatever evil may blend with its temporary influence, it is intrinsically the agent of liberty, and it is the first thing at which a despot strikes. When I consider, too, the cosmopolitan spirit which it must beget, bringing together, as it does, the interests and sympathies of the world, I look upon it as an instrument of progress, and of hope—a great social force—a force to be watched, to be criticised, but a force whose impulse on the whole is in the right direction.

But I mentioned the *Platform* as another of these Social Forces. This agent comprehends much that I am compelled to pass by—much that has an essential influence upon social movements. By the Platform, I mean all those methods of oral address and discussion which are less formal than

the Forum, the Professor's chair, and the Pulpit. Everybody is aware that such institutions as the popular Lyceum, such edifices as Metropolitan Hall, and the Tabernacle, are peculiarities of our own time. The lecture room, so common all over the land, and in many instances taking the place of public amusements, is a new thing. World-conventions and philanthropic anniversaries, are products of the nineteenth century. All the great questions of the day and brought into the hearing of the people—the problems of society, of reform, of national policy, are there stated and discussed. And so the living voice of the orator, always so potent in a democracy, is, especially in our age and country, a Social Force, changing the ideas and influencing the sentiments of men. The Moral and Religious bearings of all these points, may well be considered, and many of them must be estimated highly in their contributions to this kind of Social Force. But I prefer now to select out of these, for more immediate illustration, the Moral and Religious relations and significance of Science. For this also is popularized. The philosopher of our day does not shut up his knowledge in bristling technicalities—does not limit it to the initiated few. The geologist brings the fruit of his researches within the bowels of the earth, the astronomer comes from his study of the heavens,

to enlighten the public mind, and to apply the Truth thus yielded by nature to human needs and conditions—at least to instruct and improve. And what effect has science upon the minds and hearts of men now? Will it make them better, or lead them away from higher realities, and holier Truths? It must be said, that some are inclined to put these revelations of nature to merely a secular use. They treat it simply as a quarry of materials, or a reservoir of forces. They wind their way into its secrets, they coax and bind its energies, that they may refine the methods of luxury, or increase the mass of wealth. With imposing forms they advance to these results. With the ship and the plough, the compass and the telescope, the rail-car and the telegraph, the furnace and the loom. Nor can we deny the grandeur of this spectacle of man's use of science, his dominion over nature, as exhibited at the present day. Herein, too, is a moral significance. It is a proof of his immortality, that while these material elements are united with his body, and hold the mortgage of his dust, they are obsequious to his purposes, and before the *moral* and *intellectual* man assume an attitude of inferiority. This is a new proof of his immortality, that flashes out in the wide diffusion of science at the present day—that man appears as a workman, nature but as an im-

plement. But none the less it is a mistake, my friends, to overlook the better significance of nature, and make it simply a minister to our lusts; to seek in its enormous forces only the agents of a use that is limited to the earth, and ends in ashes. Nature, in its very attitude of an agent, declares a higher end than itself, as a part of His Ways who is not a mere physical creator, an engineer, or architect; but a moral and spiritual Deity, who has not ordained this wondrous frame of things only for earthly and material uses.

Another class, apparently, rest with scientific *investigation,* and see nothing around them but a collection of laws and phenomena. A materialistic philosophy, however, or a godless positivism, cannot be said to be popular at the present time, or to constitute a Social Force. It is simply an assumption to consider the universe as a mere machine, a huge orrery, and so to shut up all the avenues of faith and prayer. God comprehends nature, but nature does not comprehend God. Depths of Reality and Modes of Operation—an unfathomed Region of the Divine—lies around this world of nature. Do the bars of matter shut out God from the soul? Has He no communication with the human spirit except in concert with electric currents or chemical processes? Surely, He who in nature moves all things with the pulse of Law, from some region

outside nature may pour unseen forces which shall sway the least man's life, and play into this austere regularity in such a way as to number and shelter the hairs of our heads. And who shall say that Prayer has no ground of reason, because Science cannot find any avenue for it? Who shall forbid this instinct that cleaves every cloud strait up to God, because *visibly* He does not reach down His Hand? Can He not respond to the cry that goes up from the cottage by the seaside, where the wife remembers her tempest-tossed husband, because the winds hoist and wheel and the waves dash by law? Can no Light from His calm Love be shed upon the mourner's tears, because the sky says nothing, and the long grass is still? Peradventure He may find some way of access, untraceable in the workings of matter, unseen through optic glass, when the mother pleads for her wayward boy, and beseeches Him to touch the issues of his heart!

But while this tendency of Science at the present day, with the few, is thus open to criticism vindicating the Christian Faith, let us have no dread of its disclosures or its popular influence. The profoundest significance of Nature is Religious. Let us welcome all that Science may bring from the earth beneath, or the heavens above. No virtual discord will remain between the Works,

and what our own souls, in their wants and aspirations, assure us are the Words of God. Intimate as we may become with the secrets of Nature—wide as its starry portals may open on our sight—it will render none the less evident our moral need and alienation; none the less evident the wonder of that Love Which yearns from the Cross, nor the Glory that bursts from the broken Sepulchre. For my part, I do not believe that in proportion as we obtain exact knowledge we dry up the sources of reverence and faith. Wide as the realm of discovery may spread, still it is belted by a zone of mystery, and in the most familiar fact there beats a heart of wonder. Nor is there more that kindles our admiration, or excites our humility, in the darkness of ignorance, than in the splendors of truth. Law, surely, is no less divine than impulse; or Order than irregularity. Imponderable gases, and magnetic spines, are as wonderful as stone or leaf, and this world of new scientific names is involved with the old Infinity. So far, then, as the influence of Science becomes a popular or Social Force, I do not anticipate an irreligious result, but quite the contrary.

And, surely, one foresees something better than sordid or sensual achievement in those vast *practical* applications of Science which gleam and play around us. Will not these material agents gradu-

ally lift men above material drudgery, into a freer action of brain, and a fresher realm of heart? What barricades of prejudice and error, too, shall the telegraph oversweep! what warp and woof of brotherhood shall the punctual steamship weave! The expectant throbs of Enterprise contain a moral pulse, and the swarthy front of Labor shines with glorious prophecy. Depend upon it, this is the moral significance of the practical Science of our day. It heralds higher advances of intelligence, and Religion, and the Spiritual Man, and God's Kingdom upon the earth.

And so, as I look around me in the great city, and consider the operations of the Press, with its word of power in Literature; and the influence of the Platform, with its word of power in justice, and philanthropy, and science, I welcome with more enthusiasm than ever the great truth set forth in the recent lines of one of our poets. "Sometimes," says he—

"—Sometimes glimpses on my sight,
Through present wrong, the eternal right
And, step by step, since time began,
I see the steady gain of man.

"That all of good the past hath had,
Remains to make our own time glad;"
* * * * *
"And——still the new transcends the old,
In signs and tokens manifold:
Slaves rise up men, the olive waves
With roots deep set in battle-graves!

"Through the harsh voices of our day,
A low, sweet prelude finds its way;
Through clouds of doubt, and creeds of fear,
A light is breaking, calm and clear.

"That song of Love, now low and far,
Ere long shall swell from star to star!
That light, the breaking day, which tips
The golden-spired Apocalypse!

And now, among these other Forces in the midst of the great city, what is the position and influence of the *Pulpit?* It is the organ of that "Word" which in a special sense is said to have been "with Power." It represents the great interest of Morality and Religion, which in reality is the profoundest Social Force. It would not be correct, however, to say that the estimation in which the Pulpit is held at the present day, is the measure of the estimation in which Morality and Religion are held. For these Influences have organs beside this, through which they reach the popular mind and heart. And, notwithstanding the striving and the excitement, and the immense materialism of our age, I am inclined to think there is no less positive Religion in the souls of men than ever; but, considered as a great, living, practical Reality, there is more. Worldliness enough there is: sin and moral deadness, to an appalling extent; but I do not believe there is any more than under other influences, compara-

tively speaking. I believe the profoundest drift of things in the present age, is not towards irreligion, but Religion. Only a fresher, broader, more practical definition of Religion is given. And I should say that this decides somewhat the estimation in which the Pulpit is now held. It is not respected so much as it was, merely for itself—merely as a professional place. It is not so much respected as an organ of routine, of dogmas, of sharp dialectics—a mere word. But if it is a Word of Power; if it is a Message of practical, vital Truth; if it breathes the fresh, earnest spirit of Religion; if it touches the living nerves of humanity, and strikes present and actual sin in the teeth; if it makes men feel the *reality* of religious things—of God, of duty, of eternity; if it heaves up the common plane of life with these stupendous Sanctions, and reveals the moral significance of the least act and of every thing; if it shows how much of Divinity is concerned with humanity, and the sacredness of the obligations that bind man to man; oh! if, as with the peal of a resurrection trumpet, it breaks up dead formalities and guilty customs, and sends a thrill of moral conviction into every artery of human life; if it tears away the veils of form, and the technicalities of creed, and shows men the Actual Jesus, and brings them, with their sin-sick, thirsty, weary souls close

to his Pitying Face—close to his Living Heart;—it has in this age great power—and never had more.

The pulpit speaks for great and everlasting realities, and its language, therefore, should have all the earnestness and freshness of reality. It should break away from a mere traditional formality and routine, and address the mind and heart of to-day with a living sympathy. It should let the light of eternal relations, of Divine Sanctions, stream through actual and present interests. And yet, in all this, there need be no compromise of its essential sacredness, or its dignity. It must not be converted into a mere lyceum-desk, or a rostrum for every kind of disquisition. It is a mistake to say that the Church and the Pulpit are no more sacred than the world outside the walls, and to feel that they have no special significance. Absolutely, "every spot *is* holy ground;" but the law of association works with different degrees of intensity, and the mass of men, at least, receive an awakening and refreshment of their sympathies from certain places and symbols, without which the stream of their spiritual life would settle into a stagnant level. Professing that all places are alike sacred, they at length find no sacredness anywhere. But still it is the office of the Pulpit not to restrict the idea of sanctity, but to

diffuse it, and to show the religious and moral side of everything in life and in the universe; for the soul of man, his conscience, his affections, his will, have relations to everything. Religion thus shed into actual and daily life, becomes less vague, more real, more practical; while enough is left of mystery, of aspiration, of tenderness and of awe, to touch the issues of the most inward and sensitive piety. In one word, the Pulpit is sacred not in itself, but because of its themes; and better is the fisher's boat, with the eternal heaven above it, and the rudest realities of life around it, where the word is preached by a soul too much in earnest to study its attitudes, than the mere perfunctory and formal decencies of a reading-desk. The Pulpit is set for the great theme of religion, and, however it speaks, let it be so that men shall feel that it speaks for the most imminent and stupendous realities. Let it be conservative against reckless innovation, and every kind of theory that denies the true sanctions of the individual or of society, and would set the world at loose ends. Let it give due honor to the past, and be not afraid of a traditional reverence. If a preacher covets martyrdom in our age and country, he will be likely to meet with it here. He will find it full as popular to fall into a lax liberality and a general sweep of innovation, as to stand by ancient landmarks and re-

iterate old and solemn truths; while others, who boast of their heresy, and make a parade of their sufferings for conscience' sake, are enduring a persecution that looks very much like an ovation, with the fagots concealed in "sacrificial roses." And yet it cannot be denied that the legitimate tendency of the Pulpit is to reform; for Christianity, continually leavening the lump, is a progressive element. Let not the preacher confound a shallow bigotry, an owl-like stolidity, a time-serving timidity, with that reverent loyalty which "holds fast that which is good." The great work of the Pulpit, whether applied to individuals or to communities, is the work of legitimate reform, in which, by a natural law, the genuine seeds of the past are retained and developed in the vesicles of the future. The peculiar power of the Pulpit has always been a reformatory power, smiting like thunder upon the ears of present abuse, directed against actual sins, breaking up the sockets of concrete customs, and piercing to the core of corrupt institutions and corrupt hearts. The preacher, especially in the city, must be a true reformer, definite, emphatic, bold; not too dainty, not too classical, not too polite to recognize and mention in clear language the sins right about him. He must be really independent, without saying much about it. He should preach as if he felt that although

the congregation own the church, and have bought the pews, they have not bought him. His soul is worth no more than any other man's, but it is all he has, and he cannot be expected to sell it for a salary. The terms are by no means equal. If a parishioner does not like the preaching, he can go elsewhere and get another pew, but the preacher cannot get another soul. And, indeed, all who reflect upon the real efficacy of the Pulpit, must perceive that the essential condition of that efficacy is freedom, and that he is indeed liable to have his influence overwhelmed by other forces of the age, who overlooks the dark tide of evil that dashes against the very walls of the sanctuary to talk in abstract terms of something which affects men in general, but no man in particular. Never did the Pulpit need to be more bold than at the present hour, and to assert its office of reproof and rebuke by rising above all taint of patronage or compromise. And yet it is to be remembered that the world can be saved, not by the reformer, but by the Redeemer. The Pulpit must not be merely an organ of societies and schemes for the renovation of mankind collectively, and upon some outward points of complaint. Below this, more needful than all this, productive of all this, it must strive for the work of individual regeneration, and cause each hearer in this bustling, external, mate-

rial age, to feel his personality, his sin, and the effort he must make, under the Eye of God, for his own soul.

The Pulpit that thus, in the present age, and among the excitements and diversions of the metropolis, brings men to feel religion as a reality, the greatest of realities, is a mighty social force; for then it is truly the organ of that Word which was with power. And in this conviction let the preacher "magnify his office." There is no agency of press or platform that can take its place, or accomplish its work. This is the power of the living presence, the living voice and sympathy. And it is the agent of a power, working not merely for the world, and through the world, but above the world. A power which the deepest experiences of life, so peculiarly realized in the great city, demand—a power of rest for the weary, of peace for the troubled, of promise for the penitent, of eternal light hovering far around the thick dust of traffic and the perishable objects of so much aspiration and so much effort—a power that stands by us when the great city, with its streets and crowds and solid walls fades away, and the soul goes upward.

THE LOWER DEPTHS.

VII.

THE LOWER DEPTHS.

———"And who is my neighbor?"

LUKE x. 29.

THIS is a question of universal application, but there is no place where it has so much significance as in the great city. For, should the answer be given in a full revelation of fact, the most apathetic would be startled to discover *who*, literally, their neighbors are—to see what awful contrasts of humanity are separated by a few brick walls; how the rim of splendor melts into the outer darkness; and how the heights of refinement, and luxury, and domestic purity, hang immediate and steep over the Lower Depths. There they are, close together—inpinging one upon the other—magnificence and wretchedness, feasting and starvation, filth and diamonds, fluttering rags and chariot-wheels. There they are, men of Midas-fingers making golden what they touch—men whose escutcheon of respectability a breath has never tarnished—jostled side by side with the con-

scripts of poverty, and soldiers serving in "the tenth legion of sin." There they dwell, very near those to whom life is a routine of comfort, those to whom it is a stand-up fight with death and despair. Daughter of purity; sweetest flower of nature; from whose innocence all taint shrinks back, and whose "honor charms the air;" next to thee walks the abandoned child of shame, with unmentionable guilt upon her head, for whom there opens no door of home, from whom society turns away its face; and yet over this sharp contrast God bends an equal solicitude as He bends His own blue sky, and He, at least, sees the chord of relationship that runs from the high sanctities of thy station, and throbs down even in those Lower Depths.

And it is this fact of relationship even with the most degraded morally, or by social position, that gives a peculiar significance to the question of the text, when asked in the midst of the city. It is to reveal the far-reaching application of the answer to this question, that I now propose to consider these most wretched aspects of city life. We will turn away from the world of traffic, from the gay dominion of fashion, from the circle of amusement, from the grand spheres of intelligence and power, and even from the more splendid forms of vice, and walk a little while through these ave-

nues that run close beside them all—through these *Lower Depths* that echo so mournfully to the inquiry—"Who is my neighbor?"

It may not be necessary to say, that these *Lower Depths* comprehend two conditions not necessarily identical; the condition of abject vice, and of destitution. Far be it from me to confound honest poverty with anything that looks like moral obliquity; or to say that because one is reduced to the last strait of physical need, and is compelled to herd with the vilest, he therefore, of course, is vicious. And yet one of the very points that I must bring out before I close this discourse, is the too-common connection which actually *does* exist between these conditions. But, however separate they may be in moral respects, socially they are at the bottom of the scale—they present the most wretched features of humanity; they unfold the most awful problems of civilization. And, therefore, I treat them together.

The Lower Depths of Vice in this Metropolis! Who would unfold all their lineaments and drag them here into the public light, if he could; who could, if he would? As there are certain wonders in nature which no man can completely reproduce, either by the pencil or by words, so there are immensities of human degradation which require the eye-witness to apprehend. You, your-

self, must walk through those reeking labyrinths; must breathe that fetid air; must see into what shapes of moral abomination and physical disgust man can distort himself; must learn from inspection how intellect, and soul, and heart, can all collapse into a mere lump of animality, a condition ten-fold lower than the brute's, because of the hideous deformity and the unmistakable contrast. You, yourself, must go into lofts and cellars, where all the barriers of shame are broken down and childhood confronts the coarsest spectacles of infamy—into the apartment bare of every thing except the deadly bottle, and the rags where the father cuddles in his drunken sleep, or the mother among her babes lies prostrate in her drunken helplessness. You, yourself, must witness the frolicsome hell of midnight, where the lowest vices, the grossest conceits of the heart, put on bodily shapes and dance together—the presence of dishevelled womanhood, worse in its degradation than man *can* be—the unclean laughter, the quarrel, the artillery of blasphemy. And, then, while it is like letting you down into a nether world, and giving you a lurid revelation of horrors you had not conceived, you did not think could exist in a land of refinement, and churches, and homes, you can carry away with you only the terrible impression, the swimming mist of hideous

transactions, and hideous faces—you cannot describe to others. And, probably, it is well that it is so. There is no edification in the mere details of vice. And for the young and the innocent, it is a good thing, slight as these brick walls are, that they are thick enough to shut out this abominable reality. Nevertheless, it is necessary we should know that these Lower Depths do exist—opening down close by us—in the midst of the Great City. And whatever facts shall help us to realize that thus not a few but a vast army of our fellow-men, our neighbors, are existing—that down in those black pools, affections, minds, souls, are sweltering and perishing—that there men, and women, and children, are matted together in the very offal of debasement—that up against the walls of our dwellings heave surges of moral death out from human hearts, and dashed back by our indifference upon those hearts again—any facts that will help us to realize this, must be welcomed and urged, whatever may be our squeamishness or our horror. For my part, at present, I merely reiterate the fact that such Depths there are, very near to us. And, while here to-night we assemble in this goodly temple, a dreadful worship is going on there, under dark canopies of ignorance, and recklessness, and sensuality ; with curses for prayers, and crime for

sacrifice, and all around abused and fallen shrines of humanity. And, my friends, no pursuit, no station, permits us to be entirely aloof from this —with all this each of us has something to do, if there is any significance in the question, "Who is my neighbor?"

But turn from this, for a little while, to consider the Lower Depths of *Destitution* that exist in the bosom of the Metropolis. I speak not now, of course, of mere poverty—that state where labor, and often the most strenuous labor, is necessary to comfortable subsistence. This is the lot of a large majority, perhaps always must be—and certainly it is a condition full of blessings. There are thousands of people who ought to be extremely thankful that they are not rich. Who owe their health, their mental power, their vivacity of spirit, the enjoyment of their homes, to the very strain and drive of their lot in life. Had they tumbled into the lap of wealth, they would have lain in it as in a feather-bed, mere bundles of laziness, nervousness, and fatuity, doing nothing, and in the true sense of the term worth nothing. I do not say, of course, that those who earn wealth, are apt to come to this—but that this would be the case with a good many, if their wishes had been granted—if they had been born rich, or some one who had got to die had thought of

them, and "left them something." I believe they really are not fit to be rich, and are better off as they are—in the harness.

But, aside from this common run of poverty, there are depths of absolute *Destitution*—not of limited means, but of real want—not of bread earned in the sweat of the brow, but bought with the blood and the sinew and the very essence of life—with that which is more sacred than life. My friends, this is a busy population here in our city—for the most part a cheerful population, with homes to go to, and food to eat, and clothes to wear, and something to do. And yet, in this city, there are, I am told, fifteen thousand paupers. Comfortably lodged, we will hope, the most of these people are who crowd the streets—and yet a friend of mine told me of a room he had visited, not more than twelve feet square, in which slept thirty persons, three tiers deep. This is but a specimen. In another of the same size, says a writer, "were five resident families, comprising twenty persons, of both sexes and all ages, with only two beds, without partition, or screen, or chair, or table, and all dependent for their miserable support upon the sale of chips gleaned from the streets at four cents a basket." "Another, seven feet by five, an attic room, containing scarcely an article of furniture but a bed, on

which lay a fine-looking man in a raging fever, without medicine, or drink, or suitable food; his toil-worn wife engaged in cleaning dirt from the floor, and his little child asleep on a bundle of rags in the corner;"—"another, of the same dimensions, in which, seated on low boxes around a candle placed on a keg, were a woman and her eldest daughter, sewing on shirts, for the making of which they were paid *four* cents; and even at that price, out of which they had to support two small children, they could not get a supply of work;" and yet "another, warmed only by a tin pail of lighted charcoal placed in the centre of the room, over which bent a blind man endeavoring to warm himself, around him three or four men and women, swearing and quarrelling," and in one corner a dead woman, and in the other two or three children on a pile of rags. But why pursue the catalogue? This is but a glimpse into the Lower Depths of *Destitution* that open downwards from the doors of luxury and the splendid halls of fashion, and help make up the features of the City. With all this, let imagination paint the surrounding scenery—the filth, the damp, the rottenness, the noisomeness, the stifling air, the moral debasement; and though it may be true that "one half of the world does not know how the other half lives," it will help us to think how a wide circle

of men and women around us try to live—it will add, perhaps, some significance to the query in the text.

But, leaving these general circumstances of destitution, there is one point upon which I wish especially to dwell. I allude to that large class of women who do their best to fight off starvation by the most toilsome labor, and who yet too often see before them only dishonor or death—the needle-women of our City. Perhaps this is treading upon the business interest of some. I can't help it if it is. Perhaps I don't know as much about it as I might; but I know enough to make me sick at heart. It may be there is no remedy for it; but whatever may be the state of the system, in some way or another it is a foul one, and I will not be restrained from saying that such a condition of things is an abominable shame. Why, I am informed from one source, that based on a calculation made some two years ago, the number of those who live by sewing exceeds fifteen thousand. Another, who has good means of information, tells me there are forty thousand earning fifteen shillings a week, and paying twelve for board; making shirts at *four* cents a piece. Another statement divides these workwomen into three classes;—the first are but few, whose fine sewing will procure them steady employment, at

something like living wages. The second is constituted of those whose wages do not average over two dollars and a half per week,—the third are widows, sometimes stricken in years, who, by the most intense assiduity, may get one dollar and a half per week. Take what estimate we will, then, here are thousands, not paupers, not drunkards and idlers, but working at starvation wages; fighting death on the one side and the devil on the other; and if these are not the Lower Depths of *Destitution*, what are? And just consider. This scanty pittance depends upon good health, constant labor, contracted sleep, isolation from every social and almost every moral interest. Before the weary seamstress is the appalling thought of the sick-day, the failing eyesight strained by the dim lamp and the twilight, the sinking constitution broken down by unremitted exertion. Oh! it is terrible to be seized thus by the iron fingers of necessity, and to be fastened, body, heart, soul, to a machine which must be kept in motion by the effort of the entire life, or the life itself is crushed out. And, then, when we consider that they are working not alone for themselves, but for children whose cry for bread is a stab to the holiest sensibilities of a mother; then, when after all their toil, their sleepless nights, their aching, un-resting days, starvation looks not merely upon

them, but upon those young babes, who, who wonders that they should take the price of dishonor, though it be as the price of blood? I do not excuse this desperate resource—to which thousands, I am told, compelled by these conditions, *do* resort—I do not excuse it; I have no judgment to pass upon it; but O! gay lady, gathering scornfully about thee the robes that these silk-worms of destitution have wrought out of their very life-strings; O! puffed-up moralist; O! canting preacher; I will believe that if the angel who records does not "blot out with a tear," God may see that the core of their hearts is sounder and better than yours. And this is the dread alternative with thousands—starvation or sacrifice. We, in our comfort, may reason abstractly and reason right—may *say* what we would *do;* but God keep us from like temptations! Such is another phase of the Lower Depths around us. My friends, in the shifting of fortune—the mysterious work of this world's change,—who can tell how dear to him *she* may be who will be compelled thus to face hunger, and fight with despair? But, however that may be, *this* we *know*, that it is one of us who thus suffers—that it is our neighbor. Much more upon this point I might say; but I had rather quote here those lines so familiar—but lines which, if a noble end

of humanity makes poetry, belong to the very highest poetry—I cannot refrain quoting from that poem of Hood's, which is set to the very motion of the needle-woman's toil, and is the most articulate expression of her woe.

"With fingers weary and worn,
With eyelids heavy and red,
A woman sat in unwomanly rags,
Plying her needle and thread—
Stitch, Stitch, Stitch,
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
And still with a voice of dolorous pitch
She sang the song of the shirt.

Work! work! work!
While the cock is crowing aloof.
And work—work—work!
Till the stars shine through the roof!
It's oh! to be a slave
Along with the barbarous Turk,
Where woman has never a soul to save,
If THIS is Christian work!

Work—work—work!
Till the brain begins to swim;
Work—work—work!
Till the eyes are heavy and dim!
Seam, and gusset, and band,
Band, and gusset, and seam,
Till over the buttons I fall asleep,
And sew them on in a dream.

* * * * * * *

Work—work—work!
In the dull December light,
And work—work—work!
When the weather is warm and bright:

While underneath the eaves
The brooding swallows cling,
As if to show their sunny backs,
And twit me with the Spring.

Oh! but to breathe the breath,
Of the primrose and cowslip sweet,
With the sky above my head,
And the grass beneath my feet:
For only one short hour,
To feel as I used to feel,
Before I knew the woes of want,
And the walk that costs a meal.

* * * * * * *

Oh! men with sisters dear!
Oh! men with mothers and wives!
It is not linen you're wearing out,
But human creatures' lives!
Stitch, Stitch, Stitch!
In poverty, hunger, and dirt,
Sewing at once, with a double thread,
A SHROUD as well as a shirt."

Such, then, are some of the features of the Lower Depths of *Vice*, and the Lower Depths of *Destitution*. And mark, although I have specified the difference, how easily, I may say necessarily, they run together, so that what is said of the one bears upon the other. And, my friends, what *can* be said? Is there any remedy? or must we believe that this guilt and misery, so extreme and abject, must exist in the world, and cleave to the great city for ever. For my part, I have no theory to propose,—I am no adept in Political Economy,—I represent no association or scheme. I believe

that no organic change of society can be sudden—no radical evil can be plucked out and thrown away at once. I have simply hinted at a few facts, to refresh your consciousness of who your neighbors are—of what relations you sustain here in the metropolis. And yet, as any discourse must be profitless unless it suggests something for us to *do*, let us see if out of the present aspect of City Life we cannot draw some duty, and receive some moral impulse.

One of the most obvious things in contemplating these Lower Depths of Vice and Poverty, is the fact that mere *Education* is not a sufficient remedy. Religious teaching is not enough. Do not think, for a single moment, that I under-estimate it. I know that the moral power which religion imparts is mighty over external circumstances, and that there is no true reformation unless its regenerating life strikes into the very centre of the heart. In the hour of temptation nothing else can be depended upon. Do not accuse me of being merely an outside reformer, holding the theory that all man requires to make him stand erect is a few circumstantial props. I hold to no such thing. But it is sheer cant to accuse those who say with me—"give to the poor and the vicious physical and immediate help"—it is sheer cant to accuse them of holding any theory of mere circumstances. We

do say, that tracts, and Bibles, and religious conversation, will be but little heeded by those who are numb with cold, and perishing with hunger; that in order to get at their inner nature, a thick crust of physical misery must be removed; that foul alleys, and fetid apartments, have a bad moral influence, and that the gospel itself has far less efficacy than in the clear light and the sweet air. And this was the way our Master worked. He laid hold of the evil that was closest at hand—touched the blind eye, the fevered brow, the withered limb, and would not dismiss those whom he had fed with the richest Spiritual food, fasting for want of material bread, lest they should "faint by the way." So these, in the Lower Depths of the great City, who *are* fainting by the way, must be restored with bread and meat; these who are shivering with the winter's frost, must be warmed and clothed; and we must reach their deepest nature—intellectual and moral—by removing that cramp of physical position, that craving of physical need, which they most distinctly feel. I must confess, that when I look upon the condition of the extreme poor, I draw some consolation from the fact that all their faculties are not cultivated into a refined sensibility—that their condition is not as miserable to them, as it would be to hearts and minds educated and used to all the advantages of

life. The keenest sting of poverty is inflicted upon those who have fallen from a station of comfort and respectability into the association of brutality and vice, as well as utter need. To have a memory of better things, together with the consciousness of present evil; to look back upon a reach of sunny days ending in this unutterable darkness; this *is* indeed calamity. And so to educate the mind and the heart, without furnishing employment for the hands, and nourishment for the body, would only render the fact of destitution more terrible; because it would refine the *sense* of it. No: let this inner and outer help work together as much as possible, but let the most immediate want be the most immediately met. Why, how much must the fundamental conception of life itself be affected by the pressure of these sharp material circumstances. We know that sorrow intrudes everywhere, and responsibility rests upon each in proportion to his gifts, and the solemn messenger comes and lays his hand upon all. Nor can we, for a moment, be deluded by any external possession or privation as a standard of essential happiness or misery. But I say that life itself—life as a fact—is a different thing to those who have opportunities to live, to get above it, to look beyond it, to use it for its highest ends; it is a different thing from what it is to those who have to snatch

and struggle like drowning people to preserve the sheer spark of vitality; who are bent down to grinding toil that leaves no time for thought, and who are pitched by circumstances into the very sweep of guilt. I do not say, then, that the circumstances are all; but that the circumstances are mighty, and must be modified and removed before the higher influences of knowledge, of temperance, or Religion can effectually work, or find admittance.

Again, mere *Charity* is not a sufficient remedy for these evils. That which encourages pauperism, of course will not diminish pauperism. Men will hardly be won from a life of destitution and vice, so long as a mere cry of dependence will procure them a supper and a bed. The pittance which you bestow for clothes or fuel may relieve a temporary necessity, but it does not make *them* any better—it does not give them any more real power to help themselves. And institutions of benevolence, for almost every form of human need, are not wanting in our city. Money is given quite freely. There are few hearts that will not be touched by the appeal for shivering women and starving children. But, after all, what effect does this have upon the nether springs of destitution—upon the shoals that cluster and putrify in the sinks of vice? We may well ask,

whether by the gift of a spontaneous generosity, the play of an easy sympathy, we do not think to rid ourselves of a stringent responsibility—whether what is demanded of us by the condition of these our neighbors in the Lower Depths, is not really—"More Justice, and less Charity;" whether we must not rid ourselves of a selfish interest, and of a selfish benevolence, and recognize more distinctly the claims of each and all with whom we are bound up in the ties of a common humanity.

In one word, not attempting now any philosophical speculations upon this subject, and passing by the consideration of overcrowded spheres of activity, and direct agencies of temptation, like the innumerable dram-shops which throw down as fast as the philanthropist can set up; there are three points, going beyond the mere giving of alms, which I would urge upon those who give any heed to the question—"Who is my neighbor?"

And, first, I may say to the *rich* that they can do much in clearing out these Lower Depths, by the erection of a class of dwellings divided into compartments, each of which shall be a complete home, cheap enough for the humble laborer, and yet furnished with the accessories of pure air, fresh light, and clean water. I need not dwell upon the effect which the kind of habitation has

not only upon the physical, but also the moral welfare of men. The seeds of vice, as well as of suffering, are nurtured in foul atmospheres and crowded rooms. The scheme which I propose to the rich capitalist is no "lending to the Lord," but a dollar-and-cent matter, and those who act shrewdly upon it will not only put their wealth to a noble use, and rank among the benefactors of the age, but will, I doubt not, find it in a business sense profitable. And remember, it opens an opportunity for thousands who now do not fairly breathe and live.

My next remark concerns not only the capitalist, but people of moderate means, who are willing to give, and every year do give something, for the relief of poverty and the eradication of vice. To these I would say, so disburse your money that it will not feed a recumbent idleness, but excite the poor to maintain themselves. I have said that those who dwell in the Lower Depths require not charity, but justice. They have a right to room enough, and facilities enough, in this world, for the development of their own humanity, and what many of them seek is not food or money, but work. Let us then encourage any system which proceeds upon this plan of enabling the needy to help themselves. My friends, I represent no society here to-night, I am the mouthpiece

of nobody's scheme, but there is an Association in this city which well illustrates the idea I am now endeavoring to enforce. I allude to "The Shirt Sewers' Union." This association employs from seventy to one hundred women in a spacious and comfortable work-room, free from all evil contact, with a certainty of punctual payment and steady employment. Now our means should go to create and encourage some such system as this, or that which a noble missionary is endeavoring to carry out in the most degraded region of this metropolis. More than food or raiment or shelter for the poor, is needed employment, for it strikes at the deepest sources of suffering and guilt.

Finally, there is something which persons of any degree or means may do—they can and should cherish a large sympathy, a Christian spirit towards the poorest and the vilest. Your neighbor! what impediment makes you fail to recognize this relationship, even with the most degraded? Think, those men and women down there in the Lower Depths, are not worthless flakes tossed from the flying wheel of existence, and ground into the mire, but *souls* that God counts precious, and that Christ loves. Oh! in the spirit of him who told the story of the Good Samaritan, and who has thrown upon the darkest passages of life the light of a beautiful humanity, in his spirit call up be-

fore yourselves those toiling and those degraded ones, and think, should he pass along the streets of this city, with what an Eye and what a Heart he would regard them. Nay, even that most debased class of women, are they to be thrust wholly from the consideration of the pure and the good? Alas! then where is their hope! We cannot excuse their guilt; we cannot make it a light matter; lest right and wrong be confounded, and an easy taint creep into all the social relations. But, after all, are we sure that we press the condemnation only upon the actual transgressor? Remember by what power so many of them have fallen. Not one in five hundred, I believe, from vicious inclination—thousands of them through the deepest and tenderest affections of the human heart. I do not acquit them—I do not say it is a matter of moral indifference; but I *do* say, carry the guilt up where it really belongs—lift a share of it from the heads of these frail ones in the street, and cast it upon thousands of men caressed and respected in high places. Let the sharers, too often the authors of their guilt, bear their full part of the punishment and the shame. But respecting these fallen ones, I preach my Master's Gospel of Mercy. They are human—the lineaments of their kind, ay, the traits of their womanhood are in them. Encourage any effort, any "Home" that

affords them opportunity to retrace their steps. Tell them not that their recovery is hopeless; for this is the last bond that confirms the sinner in his guilt—the conviction that there is no chance for recovery; that try as he may, do as he may, there is no help for him, the world turns its face from him, and he must go stumbling to the grave with his sin and his reproach cleaving to him. What right have you and I, with our temptations, perhaps, not more nobly resisted; with our guilt, it may be, less excusable in God's sight; what right have you and I to wrap ourselves in our righteousness, and set up this virtuous scorn, and refuse this help to anything that like ourselves is human?

But especially be ready with encouragement for those who toil on in their destitution, and yet retain their moral loyalty. Now I hold in utter contempt those who disavow all faith in womanhood, and vent their skepticism and their ribald sneers against their mothers' and their sisters' sex. But having all faith in womanhood, and respect for it, my chief honor is for that woman who, in privation and exposure, in the midst of temptations that appeal to the deepest motives of her daily life, still toils on, and endures and suffers, and not for a moment thinks of wavering from the right, and scorns the proffered wrong, and bears the jewel of her reputation sparkling and pure through the

trial. I would go farther to render homage to such an one, than I would to a crowned queen. And such there are—even in the Lower Depths such there are. I was much struck with an incident related to me by one who is nobly toiling in those regions of our city. In the course of his labors, one day, he found, in a most wretched apartment, some seven or eight women and children, of different ages, marked by all the abominations of intoxication and shame. But in the apartment also was one girl, whose fine face and intelligent bearing especially attracted his attention. She was evidently not a member of the family occupying the room, and, upon inquiry, he ascertained that she was the daughter of a mechanic, had been brought up under better influences, and was yet alien to the vice all around her. She held in her hand a book in which were some lines, written as she said by her brother, then at sea. They were entitled, "My Childhood's Home," and were as follows :

"Our early home, that place so dear,
In memory I could trace;
And almost feel the burning tear
Fall from a mother's face.

"That childhood's home's deserted now,
That mother's voice is still,
And the winds breathe soft and low
Sad music from the hill."

But a breath of sanctity from that "Childhood's home" had lingered about her. Step by step she had descended into this wretchedness. And yet, parting one by one with almost every article of clothing, she had battled against the worst temptation and come out unscathed from the flame. I don't know, my friends, why we should look back to the bloody arena, or the crackling fire, or some prominent scene in history, for instances of sublime, womanly heroism. I find it amidst those grimy walls, those reeking vapors of lust and crime; heroism transcendently beautiful.

I have always been much affected by another incident, which I read some time since. It was originally related by Dr. Taylor in his Tour through the manufacturing districts of the North of England. "We entered one house," says he, "tenanted by a young couple, whom I first mistook for brother and sister. They were husband and wife, about six years married, but fortunately without children. On a table of the coarsest wood, but perfectly clean, stood what we were assured was the only meal they had tasted for twenty-four hours, and the only one they had a reasonable hope of tasting for twenty-four hours to come. It consisted of two small plates of meal porridge, a thin oaten cake, some tea so diluted that it had scarce any color, and a small portion

of the coarsest sugar in the fragment of a broken bowl. Their furniture had been sold piece-meal to supply pressing necessities, their clothes had been pawned; they had hoped for better times, but they felt that their condition had grown worse. The man would have gone to a foreign land, but he would not leave his wife alone to die. My friend asked him, whether under the circumstances he did not repent his early and imprudent marriage. He paused, looked fondly at his wife, who returned his gaze with a melancholy smile of endearing affection—he dashed the tear aside, and with calm firmness replied—"Never! we have been happy, and have suffered together; she has been the same to me all through."

Beautiful triumph of good over evil! In hundreds of dark places art thou born this hour. Deathless love is baptized in dens of misery; and noble self-sacrifice toils on in temptation and pain.

And when I think that in the lowest depths of human life there are those who with suffering and sorrow hold fast their integrity, I am almost glad that life is not longer; and when I think of the Christian faith and patience brightening around their dying beds, there comes to me a fresh interpretation of the words in the Apocalypse—"What are these which are arrayed in white robes? And whence come they? . . . These are they which

came out of *great tribulation*, and have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. . . . They shall hunger no more, neither shall they thirst any more. . . . . For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes."

SOCIETY AND THE INDIVIDUAL.

VIII.

SOCIETY AND THE INDIVIDUAL.

So the carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil.

ISAIAH XLI. 7.

"IT is the universal law of all that exists in finite nature," says a philosopher of the present day, "not to have, in itself, either the reason or the entire aim of its own existence." We need not look far for an illustration of this. In the system of Nature all about us, we find that each thing has its intrinsic peculiarity—a life in and for itself. But this is only part of its meaning, and by no means the grandest part. It is also a member of a general body, and discharges an office as such. Thus, for instance, we may consider the earth itself as a combination of chemical constituents, an assemblage of geological or geographical forms. But, when we begin to study its adaptations—when we discover how each mountain-chain, and every sea that scoops its surface, and every plant that clings to its bosom, belong to a great order of mu-

tual demand and supply—when we regard the entire globe not as a mere mass of matter swinging in space, but as a theatre of sentient existence, and especially of spiritual education, we detect in it a sublime significance. And, wherever we turn our eyes, we see the great fact that nothing exists in and for itself alone. It is reiterated in the circulation of the waters and the changing currents of electric life, in the trees that drop their unreluctant fruit, and in those fossil remains of beings that, living and perishing ages ago, make our materials of use and beauty.

Involved with this fact—what indeed may be called another form of stating this fact—is the law of *differences*. All movement, all life, comes from the contact of dissimilar things. The universe is a vast system of exchange. Every artery of it is in motion, throbbing with reciprocity, from the planet to the rotting leaf. The vapor climbs the sunbeam, and comes back in blessings upon the exhausted herb. The exhalation of the plant is wafted to the ocean. And so goes on the beautiful commerce of nature. And all because of *dissimilarity*—because no one thing is sufficient in itself, but calls for the assistance of something else, and repays by a contribution in turn.

But this law is equally apparent when we pass from the physical world into the sphere of human

association, and of private action. And its best illustration is found in the conditions of a metropolis. Indeed, from the operation of business alone, both in its conscious and its unconscious movements, we may draw the entire significance of *Society* and the *Individual*—of what each man contains in himself, and has a special mission to do —and of what, either by way of obligation or reliance, binds him to others. It is a beautiful spectacle—the industry of a great city waking up in the morning light, and moving in all its spheres. The smoke puffing afresh from forge and factory; the rattle of wheels here and there breaking the early silence; the strokes of labor commencing from roofs and workshops; the steamers panting at the wharves; the white sails filling with the breeze; the warehouses opening their eyelids along the streets; the multiplying footsteps, the increasing voices—until, one by one, all these energies slip the leash; one by one these waves of sound swell into the universal roll of activity and toil. And thus do these several interests, starting out from different points, really form one vast, inter-dependent mechanism, bound about by laws of common weal and common obligation. Each has his own work to do, yet each receives from and gives to others, while the profoundest lesson unfolded in this intercourse, is a clearer perception

and a moral apprehension of the demands and the limits of these relations. The great lesson taught by this mechanism of Trade and Labor; the great lesson taught by the mingling yet distinct life of the city; is, in fact, threefold, and with a consideration of this I propose to complete the present Series of Discourses.

"The carpenter encouraged the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smote the anvil." These words, referring to one prominent sphere of City Life, are applicable to the whole, and may stand as the symbol of the whole. They indicate the threefold lesson of which I spoke. In the first place, there is the inevitable social relation—in the second place, the demands of that relation—and, finally, the individual work, the specific mission inside that relation.

In the first place, I say, in the great city, there is an inevitable social relation, as with the carpenter and the goldsmith, brought together to do their part in a common work—in the general field of endeavor. In every man there is much that is to be comprehended only by reference to Society. Without this, his qualities on the one hand are incomplete, on the other superfluous. The phenomena of *expression*, for instance, which have for their organ that wonderful telegraph the human face, pre-suppose the communion of others, who

are to interpret these inscriptions of identity, and this play of thought. The instrument of *speech*, again,—that branching luxuriance of language, which becomes more vascular the closer we pare it to the roots—this faculty which of itself lifts man infinitely above the brute, and instead of confused moanings spreads around the earth a network of articulate intelligence; of what significance would it be without the social relations?

But man's wants, as well as his capacities, find their complement only in Society. His heart could not endure solitude. We do not comprehend, perhaps, how much we live in others—how much we need them, and receive from them. Our eyes are listless, as the busy forms that crowd these streets pass before them. If a hundred, or a thousand, should drop away, we would not heed it. We may think as little of the essential connection between ourselves and the throng about us, as we do of the arteries that carry the blood to and from our hearts. But now let us suppose that a sudden dispensation should sweep away all this multitude, and leave one of us in the great city alone. As he stepped forth in the morning, how would the strange silence smite upon him? How painfully would he listen for the accustomed roar of wheels, and look for the unnoticed crowd to pass by! The hollow echo of his feet upon the pavement, at

every step, would be more terrible than thunder. As he passed the rows of dwellings, with no children's faces at the windows; as he descended into the world of traffic, all still as the desert—his soul would grow sick within him. The monarch of this mast-girdled domain, he would envy the condition of the meanest slave. There would be no wealth for him in the unclaimed riches of banks and ware-houses; no temptation in the luxury of palaces; no enjoyment in holding at his will all which those vanished thousands toiled for, or vainly envied. Then, by its deprivation, would he learn the silent joy that throbs in the contact of man with man—the life that springs up in mutual dependence—in the circulation and interchange of powers; and the utter desolation of a solitary individualism. And these feelings would not wear away by custom, but the solitude would grow more ghastly day by day. How gladly then would he hail the appearance of the neglected cripple who used to sit by the way-side; or of one human face, though it should emerge from the lowest den of shame. And if, by another dispensation, those multitudes should all flow back again, he would throw off the spell of loneliness as an ugly dream, and find a new being in the presence of swarms whom he can never know, and whom now he passes unheeding by.

Ah! depend upon it, there is an unconscious inspiration with which the carpenter encourages the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him who smites the anvil—an inspiration caught from simple contact; from hidden sympathies that run to and fro through humanity as through a common organism. And this is the practical inference to be drawn from this inevitable relationship, from the bare fact of society;—that humanity is corporate, bound up in an indissoluble unity, and that no group or member is unaffected by the general good or evil, any more than the public weal can escape the influence of a specific disease, or a local benefit. Like the beautiful law of nature to which I referred in the commencement of this discourse, no one has in himself "either the reason, or the entire aim of his existence." It is absurd for any man to style himself "*Independent.*" He may have unlimited pecuniary resources at his command, but what are these without the ministration of other men? How essential to his welfare is the meanest drudge, and the very breath of those whom he despises. It is folly for a class of people to set themselves apart as exclusive—as holding an inherent and divine patent of nobility. Especially ridiculous in American society, where it is inconsistent not only with the mutual dependence ordained by nature,

but with our theory of man. We, in that theory, know no impassable barriers. We repudiate badges and uniforms. We recognize the manhood of every man. The doctrine which blazes out to the world in the front of our great charter, is equality of birth-right, identity of blood, the dignity of a like spiritual nature. Therefore, let no impediment be set in his way. Let no chain be upon his heel, no smutch of caste upon his forehead. If there is genuine force in him, he shall encounter no hereditary obstacle. Though he sprung from the loins of a beggar, he may climb to a seat grander than a throne. What a miserable farce, then, is an American "aristocracy"—an "*upper* ten-thousand"—when it claims by these terms any actual *separation* from other conditions of men. If a man can amuse himself with the conceit that a few hundred thousand dollars, a fine establishment, costly wines, and horses, really make him a greater personality in the universe than the poor brother by his side, so that the latter has no business to "come between the wind and his gentility," why—it may do no great harm, so long as he keeps the conceit to himself. Or, if a class of people choose to *play* nobility, or affect a titled distinction, it's as lawful, perhaps, as any other comedy. Though we may remind them that their only source of nobility is in the

very things they affect to despise. Their good, honest fathers, and grandfathers, industrious and steady, had more nobility in one muscle of their sweaty toil, than runs through all their arteries. I can respect the aristocracy of family—the consciousness of blood that has flowed through historic veins, and throbbed under blazoned shields on fields of renown. I can respect the aristocracy of talent, rising above all material conditions in its splendor and its power. I can respect the aristocracy of enterprise, that bursts all obstacles, and itself earns and holds with a modest self-assertion. But of all aristocracy, the aristocracy of mere vulgar, flaring wealth, and nothing else, is the emptiest and the silliest. Absurd, my friends, so far as its pretensions clash with our theory of Society. But this, or any other exclusiveness, is more than absurd, it is really impossible, when we get at the actual constitution of nature. For, I repeat, no man, no class, *can* be exclusive. Each depends upon all, lives by the help of all, is bound up with the welfare of all—in one living, sympathetic organism. And this fact, with the practical inferences that grow out of it, is one phase of the lesson unfolded by the individual and social relations of City Life. And the practical inferences growing out of this fact, appear in the second phase of that three-fold lesson;

namely, in the *demands* of this social relation. As in nature, so in human communities, they exist not merely because of sympathies, but because of *dissimilarities*. One has some gift, some power, that the other has not. Not men equal in all respects; not men able to do precisely the same thing; but "the goldsmith encourages the carpenter, and he that smootheth with the hammer, him that smites the anvil." And in the need of this mutual help, there rises a demand for it. Now here is a point where the Spirit of Christ—the spirit of the great social Law—and the spirit of the world, appear in vivid contrast. Those who are controlled by the latter sentiment—and they are the vast majority—seize upon the privilege of the social relation to please themselves. Ask such an one what is his object in the great city—what is his chief end in social intercourse; and if he reveals the deepest motive of his heart, he will say: "Why, I avail myself of these relations, in order to get more wealth, more enjoyment, more power." All this might be legitimate, if he would not make it so exclusive—if he would not only consider what he can obtain from others, but what he can render to them. But in the city, I suspect, the most prominent figure, the figure that might be significantly inscribed on the stores, and the houses, and even the churches, is number

one. "Take care of number one" is the text virtually written at the head of the day-book, and worn like a police badge right over the heart. Not a bad principle, up to a certain point, but when made the supreme motto of life see what an effect it has upon all moral discrimination. It qualifies all duty into expediency. Every plan of action puts on a business aspect. The deepest sanction lies in that which will prove profitable. And here is the foundation of the social wrongs, which prevail so fearfully in a metropolis like this. Here is the foil of adamant which turns aside all the sallies of reform. Upon this ground stands every den of infamy, every haunt of profligacy and crime in the city. They who tempt thousands of the young to their ruin, they who put the cup of destruction to their brother's lips—rest upon the single plea—that it is *profitable.* They regard society in the simple, selfish light—as a condition to be used for their own advantage, and to this end would suck its veins dry, and fill them with poison and death. This is the selfish principle carried out to its grossest results. And there are thousands, who, while they do not stand upon these practical conclusions, occupy just these premises. Many a man there is, clothed in respectability, and proud of his honor, whose central idea of life is interest and ease — the concep-

tion that other men are merely tools to be used as will best serve him; that God has endowed him with sinew and brain merely to scramble and to get; and so, in the midst of this grand universe, which is a perpetual circulation of benefit, he lives like a sponge on a rock, to absorb, and bloat, and die. Thousands in this great city are living so, who never look out of the narrow circle of self-interest; whose decalogue is their arithmetic; whose bible is their ledger; who have so contracted, and hardened, and stamped their natures, that in any spiritual estimate they would only pass as so many bags of dollars. What have they to do with the abstract right? They are engaged with compound interest. The needs and demands of humanity to them are nothing—only as they may effect real estate. Suffering, vice, destitution, dash against them as against metallic men. If the new Jerusalem should flash upon them in a vision, they would only compute the worth of the golden streets and the jasper walls. And while many do thus live, and live respectably and unimpeachably, see, I repeat, see how closely this *principle* of living is linked to the meanest vices and the worst crimes. One man takes up the conception that he is placed here merely to make money; to get all the profit out of society he can. Another assumes that the sole object of

existence is to afford him pleasure, and he uses all opportunities to gratify his appetite and his passions. He holds no tie sacred, no sanction supreme, that opposes this impulse. And yet another claims that the world owes him a living, and if he can get it in no other way, gets it with the point of the knife, or the muzzle of the pistol. Now these are very different forms of action, but their essence is one thing—the conception that every man lives for himself alone, and is to get out of others all that he can.

But the Christian Law of society, shedding its light even through the mist of the great city, reveals the truth that these human dissimilarities are thrown together not for mere self-aggrandisement, but for mutual help; that man is placed here not simply to receive but to give. And for this some power has been granted to the least and to the poorest. To every one has been alloted some faculty of mind or body, some gift of fortune, or it may be merely a capacity to sympathise and console. But this truth it inculcates not merely in a precept. Through all the complex interests of society, through our hard and polished customs, our hollow respectabilities, our oppression and our contempt, there beams the Image of One Life perpetually unfolding Itself in Acts of Sacrifice; of One Meek Face, looking upward in Prayer, and

downward in Compassion, drooping beneath the Cross, streaming with its own blood—presenting us, in our avaricious grasping and our selfish ease, not only with the Ideal of individual Character, but the Expression of Social Duty.

All this may seem, to many of you, a kind of abstract discoursing, and yet it unfolds a very simple and pregnant principle, which no man who perceives can be at a loss to apply. It is merely the principle that we are placed in society not only to be served, but to serve—not only to get but to give; and that no one fulfils the end of his existence who does not, in some way, help and bless others, either by money, or sympathy, or good influences. And it is equally plain—capable of proof in innumerable daily instances—that the neglect of this principle lies at the foundation of every social wrong. It might be better to illustrate this by details; but, in fact, I did this in the last discourse. The great mass of that heart-sickening vice and destitution to which I alluded, is by no means the result of mere idleness, or wicked inclination, but heaves up here in the city's midst, a dark festering heap, because of lack of help and lack of sympathy; because of this selfish and one-sided conception of our social relations. Or, if another illustration is needed, take a subject upon which I have already touched in

the course of this series; a subject to which reference at this time is especially appropriate, because every one of us is going to act in reference to it, this way or that. I mean the subject of Intemperance. Everybody says it is an evil—from the mother, who prays God with every fibre of her heart to pluck her boy out of the dreadful vortex, or the wife whose mingled tears and blood testify to its brutality and its shame, to the vote-seeking demagogue whose sophistry belies his reason. The respectable citizen who suffers its taint in every vice, and feels its curse in a thousand ways, says it is an evil—and the reeling bacchanal, too drunk to know that he *is* drunk, protests, with thick-tongued energy, that "it is a great evil." But what is it that keeps the evil running on? Why does this man sell it? Because he makes money by it. And why should he not sell it, so long as respectable people use it? Ah, my well-disposed friends, animated by a great deal of benevolence in general, but none in particular, the principle which I have been discussing somewhat abstractly; the principle that we are placed in social relations not merely for self-aggrandizement but for mutual help—that society has not only benefits for us but *demands* upon us—this principle, perhaps, butts right against your practice. The same doctrine that would cause the dealer, of

his own accord, to sweep the implements of his traffic from his shelves, would cause you to shatter every decanter and demolish every wine-cask in your house. For, surely, you do not keep it there because your appetite is positively fascinated with it—you are not enslaved to its use? Of course it's a mere luxury with you, a tribute to custom, a symbol of hospitality. And, I say, if you heeded this social law, that we are bound up in relations with others not merely to receive from them but to encourage and help them, then your influence and your action in this matter could go but one way. You would have nothing to do with that which you say is an evil; with that which you know curses others; with that which, by one method and another, injures you, and me, and every man. Is there no connection between your *use* and this *abuse?* Look down into that black swamp of beastliness, that pool of loathsome intemperance. Did it spring up spontaneously there? No: it has been fed by rills trickling from heights of respectability, and through marble aqueducts of fashion. Those faces, pale, distorted, furious, tossed about in that dark sea of slime and fire, look upward to you, and catch a reflection that plays through the prism of your cut-glass decanters, and the colors of your champagne and cogniac. At least, if you really believe

that intemperance is an evil, your refusal to use intoxicating drinks will make one channel less by which it *may* get out into the world. Let that evil be denounced not merely by protest of *voice*, but by *example*. And this will be the case if you comprehend the significance of your social relations, and you will find, upon reflection, that the truths now urged constitute not merely a tissue of fine-spun argument, but something that is very practical.

And this specific instance illustrates the principle be—whatever may the demand upon our social obligations—the principle of mutual help growing out of mutual dependence. Above all other regulations and sanctions, in the great city, is needed Christ's Law of Love. How it would change these aspects and illuminate these spheres of life, through which I have led you in this series of discourses. Cherish, I beseech you, for it is very deep, very fruitful, that sympathy which, penetrating below all conditions and symbols, recognizes the *manhood* of every man, his abstract spiritual value, his relations to all the rest. Cherish that fact of human unity in diversity which is revealed to the reflective eye amidst all the diversities of toil and traffic, in the whirl of amusement, in the crowded streets, in the disguises of vice, in the coarsest forms of poverty and guilt.

This, I say, is the most significant lesson that comes to us from the social relations of the great city—the need of Christ's spirit and Christ's Law of Love.

But I observe, finally, that after we have considered the unconscious and inevitable relations of society, and the demands growing out of these relations, there still remains the *individual*, with his solitary experience and his own peculiar work. The carpenter may encourage the goldsmith, and he that smootheth with the hammer him that smites the anvil; but each has his intrinsic importance, each his special task, as every particle in nature has its own being and essence bound up though it is with the indissoluble whole. So, among all the thousands of the great city, there is a very deep and very solemn sense, in which every man is alone. He is alone in the work accomplished in his own soul—alone in his responsibility for the work he does. It is the tendency of such a condition of life to carry one away from this central truth—to cause him, in the excitement of the multitude, to forget, not in the selfish but in the spiritual sense, his supreme end and his specific accountability. I shall be sorry if the strain of these discourses has had any influence to lead you too far away from this fact—that each of you is a soul—integral, priceless, poised upon its

own responsibility; out of which flow all the issues of life; to which appeals all its moral significance.

With a due consideration of mutual dependence and the law of service heed all your social relations, but remember there are elements in your nature which reveal your personal importance, as independent of everything else except God. There are forms and activities without, but nothing is so real as that world within. No friend or guest in the house or the street, is so intimate with you as the tenants that abide in your own spiritual nature. Envy, it may be, is there, and avarice, and lust, and pride; and, mingling with the rest, there are Reverence moving you to worship, Faith drawing up your trust and fastening it upon the Infinite, and Conscience pronouncing its momentous judgments—and these would constitute a real existence, an interior world for you, though there were not another creature around you. Each man occupies an original position. Every great fact comes straight to him. Every appeal of duty must run through the alembic of his reason, his conscience, and his will. The cope of heaven bursts above him, the unfathomed depths open beneath him, the mysteries of God and Immortality come streaming in with their awful splendors, and truths that have confounded the loftiest intellects, truths that in all

ages have roused up the soul from its foundations, and baptized it with reverence, and kindled it with love, environ him as intensely as if he were the first-born of men, set face to face with fresh and unresolved problems.

Let this be the thought, then, with which I close the present series—the thought of individual reality, of individual responsibility; for out of it the essential good of life must come, in it the essential good of life must grow. So, in the deepest sense, we must live in spiritual solitude; so in the deepest sense we must meet the discipline of life So must we die. One by one from among these crowds we must go forth alone. In all our effort, then, in all our spheres of action, is there needed a more important question than this—"What is my spiritual state?" Whatever our opportunity, whatever our time, shall we not find both time and opportunity, in the profoundest and the noblest sense, to attend to *ourselves?*

In the first part of this discourse, I described the morning light falling upon the great city and waking up all its activities, summoning forth one by one its sights and sounds, and gradually revealing its net-work of reciprocity and obligation. Let us contemplate another scene. The daylight has departed. The places of business are closed. The crowds have vanished; the tumult is hushed;

and the magnificent city is covered with a shadow. And you, perhaps, a conscious personality, stand alone in the silence. Dweller in the great metropolis, look upward! Those are lights on the pathway of your destiny. You will go forth beyond them all. Look around! The noiseless air that enwraps you is filled with the flowing Life of God, with which your innermost being is involved, and which perpetually searches you and holds you up. Appropriately has the great city retreated from your sight with all its aspects, and its huge pulses of care and passion still. For all this is really, is essentially, *external* to yourself; and there comes a moment when you will feel it to be so. There comes a moment when this consciousness of God will be as of face to face. There comes a moment when all this world will slip away from you into shadow—and there will be nothing but eternity before.

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